Sri Ramakrishna's Teachings.

PART II.

by
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Publishers' Note.

THE Second Part of the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna comes out after a long interval. The paragraphs marked with an asterisk are adapted from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna by M., and those marked with a dagger are translated from his Gospel in Bengali. The publishers gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to the author of the above epoch-making works, for his kind permission to use these books

This Volume will complete the present collection of teachings of the great Master, the idea of adding a third volume being abandoned for the present. The body of teachings presented in these two volumes will be found to be sufficiently representative, if not thoroughly exhaustive, and it is sincerely hoped they will shed their benign influence on all truth-seeking souls.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS.

Need of the Guru.

401. At a game of chess the onlookers can tell what is the correct move better than the players themselves. Men of the world think they are very clever; but they are attached to things of this world—money, honours, pleasure, etc. Being actually engaged in the play it is hard for them to hit upon the right move. Holy men who have given up the world are not attached to it. They are like the onlookers at a game of chess. They see things in their true light and can judge better than the men of the world.*

402. Hence in living the life truly, one must put faith in the words of those who meditate only upon God, who have seen God. If thou seekest legal advice wilt not thou consult lawyers that are in the profession? Surely thou shalt not take the advice of the man in the street?*

403. People do not see that science deals only with conditioned knowledge. It brings no message from the Land of the Unconditioned. Such message has been brought by holy men who have seen and realised God, like the Rishis of old. It is they alone that are competent to say, 'God is of this nature.'*

Avatara—II.

404. God is indeed Infinite But He is Omnipotent. He may so ordain that His Divinity as Love may be manifest in the flesh and be among us as God Incarnate. Divine Incarnation is a fact.

Of course, one cannot make this perfectly clear by means of words. It is a fact to be seen and realised by the spiritual eyes. One must see God to be convinced of this.

By analogy we can at best faintly apprehend the matter. Suppose one touches the horn of a cow, or her feet, or the tail, or the udder; would not this be the same as touching the cow herself? For us human beings, the chief thing about the cow is the milk, which comes from the udder. Well! the milk of Divine Love streams to us from God Incarnate. *

405. Who can know God? It is not given to us, nor is it required of us to *know* Him fully. It is enough if we can see Him—feel that He is the only Reality.

A person, suppose, comes to the Holy River Ganges and touches the water. He would say, 'I have been blessed with the vision and touch of the Holy River.' Surely it is not required of him to touch the whole River from Gomukhi to Gangasagar,—from its source to the mouth! *

406. **Seekest thou God? Then seek Him in man!**

His Divinity is manifest more in man than in any other object. Look around for a man with a love of God that overflows—a man who lives, moves and has his being in God—a man intoxicated with His Love. In such a man has God incarnated Himself. *

407. Fire is latent in all objects. In the constitution of wood it remains in a degree far greater than in other objects.

(To M.): God indeed is in all things; only His Power is more or less manifest in them. God Incarnate is Divinity most manifest in the flesh. *

408. As in fireworks there is a kind of flower-pot which sends off one kind of flower for a while, then another kind, and still another, possessing, as it were, an innumerable variety of flowers, so are the Avatâras. Then there is another kind of flower-pot which when lighted burns a little and then goes off all at once. Similarly, ordinary Jivas, after long practice and devotional exercises, go into Samadhi and do not return.

Those who come with the Avatâras are either souls who are eternally free, or who are born for the last time.

409. The Avataras are born with Divine powers and Divine qualities. They can go into and stay in any state of Realisation from the highest to the lowest. In a king's palace a stranger can go only to the outer quarters, but the king's own child, the prince of the house, is free to go to every corner.*

410. Pandit Siva Nath Sastri, the Minister of the

Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, writes thus of a meeting with Sri Ramakrishna:—

A Christian preacher of Bhowanipur, who was my personal friend, once accompanied me on my visit to Ramakrishna. When I introduced my friend to him, I said—"To-day I bring a Christian preacher to you, who having heard of you from me, was very eager to see you." Whereupon the Saint bowed his head to the ground and said, "I bow again and again at the feet of Jesus." Then took place the following conversation:—

My Christian friend— How is it, Sir, that you bow at the feet of Christ? What do you think of Him?

Ramakrishna— Why, I look upon Him as an Incarnation of God.

My friend— Incarnation of God! Will you kindly explain what you mean by it?

Ramakrishna— An Incarnation like our Rama or Krishna. Don't you know there is a passage in the Bhâgavata where it is said that the Incarnations of Vishnu or the Supreme Being are innumerable?

My Friend— Please explain further; I do not quite understand it.

Ramakrishna— Just take the case of the ocean. It is a wide and almost infinite expanse of water. But owing to special causes, in special parts of this wide sea, the water becomes congealed into ice.

When reduced to ice it can be easily manipulated and applied to special uses. An Incarnation is something like that. Like that infinite expanse of water, there is the Infinite Power, immanent in matter and mind, but for some special purposes, in special regions, a portion of that Infinite Power, as it were, assumes a tangible shape

in history, that is what you call a great man; but he is, properly speaking, a local manifestation of the all-pervading Divine Power; in other words, an Incarnation of God. The greatness of men is essentially the manifestation of Divine Energy.

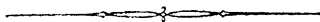
My Friend— I understand your position, though we do not quite agree with it. (Then turning to me)—" I should like to know what my Brahmo friends would say to this."

Ramakrishna— Don't talk of them, they do not see it in that light.

Myself—(addressing Ramakrishna). Who told you, Sir, that we do not believe that the greatness of the great teachers of humanity was a Divine communication, and in that sense they were incarnations of a Divine idea?

Ramakrishna— Do you really believe it to be so? I did not know that.

Afterwards there was a conversation during which the Saint illustrated, in his well-known homely way, many spiritual truths which quite struck my Christian friend as something very noteworthy.

(*Modern Review*, Nov. 1910).

Reasoning and Realisation.

411. Master (to M.): I do see that Being as a Reality before my very eyes! Why then should I reason? I do actually see that it is the Absolute Who has become all things about us; it is He Who appears as the finite soul and the phenomenal world! One must have an awakening of the spirit within to see this Reality. How long must one reason or discriminate, saying, 'Not this,' 'Not this'? Why, so long as one is unable to see Him as the Reality. Of course it would not do for him merely to say, 'I have seen beyond the possibility of a doubt that it is He Who has become all.' Mere *saying* is not enough. By the Lord's grace the spirit must be quickened. Spiritual awakening is followed by *Samadhi*. In this state one forgets that one has a body; one loses all attachment to things of the world—'Woman and Gold'; one likes no other words than those relating to God; one is sorely troubled if called upon to listen to worldly matters.

The spirit within being awakened, the next step is the realisation of the Universal Spirit. It is the Spirit that can realise the Spirit. *

412. How long may the noise last that is produced in a house where a feast is held to which a large party is called? Why, so long as they have not commenced to

eat. When dishes are served and the guests fall to eating, three-fourths of the noise is gone. Then the course of sweetmeats—the more they are dealt out, the more does the noise subside; when the turn comes for the curds (the last course) one only sound is heard, viz., 'Soop-soop.' The feast over, the next thing for the guests to do is to go to sleep!

The nearer thou comest to God the less art thou disposed to question and reason. When thou comest up to Him, when thou beholdest Him as the Reality,—then all noise—all disputations are at an end. Then it is the time for sleep, i. e., for enjoyment which comes in *Samadhi*, in which one is in a state of communion with the Blessed Vision Divine. *

Book-learning and the Highest Knowledge.

413. Books—Sacred Scriptures—all point the *way* to God. Once thou knowest the way what is the use of books? Then the hour comes for the culture of the soul in solitary communion with God.

A person had received a letter from his village-home, in which he was asked to send certain things to his kinsmen. He was going to order the purchase of the things when, looking about for the letter, he found it was missing! He searched for a long time. His people also joined him in the search. At last the letter was found and he was delighted. He took it up eagerly and went through its contents, which ran as follows:—"Please to send five seers (ten pounds) of sweetmeats, 100 oranges and eight pieces of cloth." When he knew of the contents he threw the letter aside and set forth to get together the things wanted.

How long then does one care for such a letter? So long as one knows not of its contents. The next step is to put forth one's efforts to get the things desired.

Similarly the Sacred Books only tell us of the way leading to God, i. e., of the means for the realisation of God. The way being once known, the next step is to work one's way to the goal. Realisation is the goal.*

414. What is the use of mere book-learning? The

Pandits (Sanskrit scholars) may be familiar with plenty of sacred texts and couplets. But what is the good of repeating them ? One must realise in one's soul all that is spoken of in the Scriptures. Mere reading will not bring knowledge or salvation, so long as one is attached to the world, so long as one loves 'Woman and Gold' (i. e., carnality and worldliness).*

415. People talk of errors and superstitions and pride themselves upon book-learning. But the sincere devotee finds the Loving Lord ever ready to lend him a helping hand. It matters not that he had been for a time walking along a wrong path. The Lord knows what he wants and in the end fulfils the desire of his heart.*

416. A certain King used to hear the Word of God (Bhagavad-Gita) everyday recited by a learned Pandit. At the end of the lesson for the day, the Pandit used to say, 'O King, didst thou follow all this that I read before you?' The King would only reply, 'My dear Sir, it is for *thee*, first of all, to understand the meaning of these holy texts.'

The Pandit thought within himself everyday upon his return home,—Why does the King say to me everyday, 'Do *thou* first understand the meaning'? Being a devout Brahmana he felt an awakening of the spirit within himself in the course of some time, and realised that the worship of the Lord alone is the one thing needful. Being sick of the world and its pleasures he gave it up. On the day he left his home in order to go into retirement he sent a message to the King, saying, 'O King, I have indeed at last come to know the true

meaning of the Word of God. It is,—Give up everything for the sake of the Lord.' *

417. Many think that Knowledge (of God) cannot be attained without the study of books. But higher than reading is hearing, higher than hearing is seeing (or Realisation). Hearing of wisdom from the lips of the preceptor makes a greater impression than the mere reading of books; but seeing makes the greatest impression. Better than reading about Benares is hearing about the place from the lips of one who has visited it; better even than such hearing is seeing Benares with one's own eyes. *

418. What is there in mere book-learning, if it is not accompanied with *Viveka* (discrimination of the real from the unreal) and *Vairágyam* (renunciation)? When I think of the lotus feet of the Lord, I forget myself so completely that unconsciously my cloth falls off and there is the feeling of a current of air flowing up from the feet to the head. In that state, everything belonging to the world seems to be made of straw. Even if I see a Pandit without *Viveka*, without the love of God, I know him to be no better than straw. †

Renunciation: What It Is.

419. Q. How many kinds of Vairâgyam (Renunciation) are there?

A. Generally speaking there are two, intense and moderate.

Intense Vairâgyam is like digging a large tank in one night and filling it with water. Moderate Vairâgyam is ever procrastinating. There is no knowing when it will attain full measure.

420. Vairagyam is of many kinds. One kind of Vairagyam springs from the acute pain due to worldly misery. But the better kind arises from the consciousness that all worldly blessings, though within one's reach, are transitory and are not worth enjoying. Thus, having all, he has not anything. *

421. A man, while going to bathe in a river one day, heard that a certain acquaintance had been preparing himself to renounce the world and become a Sannyasin

This at once set him athinking and produced in him the conviction that everything in this world is transitory and that Sannyasa is the way to reach the goal of life. He immediately determined to be a Sannyasin and went away, half-naked as he was, without returning home. This is an example of intense Vairagyam.†

422. Dive deep into the ocean of the Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Fear not those deep-sea monsters, avarice and anger. Coat thyself with the turmeric of Discrimination and Dispassion (Viveka and Vairagya) and such alligators will not approach thee, for the scent of this turmeric is too much for them.†

423. A husband and wife renounced the world and jointly undertook a pilgrimage to various shrines. Once as they were walking, the husband being a little ahead of the wife, saw a piece of diamond lying on the path. Immediately he moved the dust with his foot to cover the diamond, thinking that if his wife saw it, she might perchance be moved by avarice, and thus lose the merit of her renunciation. While he was thus busy the wife came up and enquired what he was doing, but in an apologetic tone he gave her an evasive reply. She, however, noticed the diamond, and reading his thought, reproachfully said, "Why have you left the world, if you feel a distinction between the diamond and the dust!"

424. A holy man used to look often at a glass prism and smile. The reason was that he could see various colours—red, yellow, violet, and so on—through the prism, and as all these colours were false, so he knew the world to be.

425. "Oh yes, all in good time," "it is just about to be taken up," "I am going to begin—" all this is procrastinating Vairagyam. His heart pants after God, as a mother's for her child, who has that intense feeling of renunciation. He wants nothing except God. The

world is, in his eyes, a well without protection and he is always fearful lest he shall tumble in. He does not think as do others: "Let me first settle all family affairs, and then I shall meditate on God." He is of fiery determination. Listen to a story:—

A certain country was visited by a great drought. The farmers were all busy bringing water to their fields by digging trenches. One of them was of great determination; he resolved to go on digging as long as ever it should take him to join his trench with the river. The hour grew late for the bath. His wife sent him oil by their daughter, who said, "Father, it is near noon, rub in this oil and come to bathe." The father said, "I cannot; I have work to do." It came to two o'clock and after, and still the peasant gave no thought to his bath or his meal. At last his wife came to the field herself and said: "Why have you not yet taken your bath? Your dinner is cold and stale. You always go to extremes. Be good now and come away. Do the rest to-morrow, or at least after eating."

The man at last grew frantic and ran after her, hoe in hand, calling her names and scolding her. And the burden of his reproaches was: "Foolish, senseless woman, don't you see that the crop is drying up and all of you will have to die of starvation? I am determined to get the water to the field to-day before I think of anything else." His wife realising the situation at last went home.

Late at night, after Herculean labour, the man was able to fulfil his promise, and when he saw the water of the river flow into his fields with a murmuring noise, his delight knew no bounds. Then coming home he

asked his wife to give him oil and prepare a *cheelum* of tobacco, and when he had bathed and eaten, he enjoyed long rest and sound sleep. This sort of determination rightly illustrates true Vairagyam.

Another peasant was engaged on the same task, but when his wife came and told him to come home, he followed her without any protest, laying his hoe on his shoulder, and saying, "Well, as you have come, I must go." He was quite unable to bring the water to his fields in time. This is an example of procrastinating Vairagyam. As without intense determination, irrigation of the fields of a husbandman is not practicable, so without intense desire no one can attain the blessed state of God-vision.†

426. It is of no use to read the Scriptures without Viveka and Vairagyam. As without Viveka and Vairagyam there is no attainment of spirituality.*

427. The best course for you is to renounce desire and work unattached.

Q. What will become of the world, if everyone leave it?

A. What do you mean? Where shall you go if you do not live in the world? ‡ Why, wherever I live, I see that I am in Ayodhya, the kingdom of Rama. Yes, this world is the Ayodhya of Rama!

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‡ Thus the Master showed that the world does not go away when a man has taken a new point of view: he creates a new world around himself.—Editor.

428. Ramachandra, when he was enlightened by the precepts of his Guru, determined to renounce the world. Dasaratha, his father, sent the sage Vasistha to instruct him. Vasistha saw that intense Vairagyam had come upon Rama. He said, "Rama, first reason with me and then leave the world. I ask you, is the world separate from God? If it be so, you are at liberty to forsake it." Pondering over these words, the prince saw that it was God Whom he saw both as the manifested world and the unmanifested Self. In His being everything existed. So Rama remained silent.†

Advice to the Worldly-minded—II.

429. It matters not whether you live the life of a householder or are men of the world,—only you must fix your mind on God. Do your work with one hand, and touch the Feet of the Lord with the other. When you have no work in the world to do, hold His Feet fast to your heart with both your hands. *

430. It may be given even to the householder to see God. It was the case with Raja Janaka, the great sage. But one cannot rise to the height of Raja Janaka all of a sudden. Janaka spent many long years in devotional practices, in solitude, away from the din and bustle of the world. Thus it would do men of the world infinite good if they would retire into solitude, even for three days at a time now and then, to the end that God may be seen and realised. *

431. The disease of a worldly man is of a serious type. Attachment to *Káma-Kánchana* has brought all this trouble on him.

Would you keep a large water-jar and savoury pickles in the same room in which a patient is laid up with typhoid fever? If you wish to cure such a patient, you must have him removed from that room, in case it is impracticable to send away the water-jar and the pickles.

A householder is such a patient; desire to enjoy worldly things is his thirst; and the mouth waters at the mere thought of the pickles. The pickles and the water-jar stand for *Kámini-Kánchana*. Hence solitude is the best remedy. *

432. One is safe to live in the world, if one has *Viveka* (discrimination of the Real from the unreal), and *Vairágya* (non-attachment), and along with these, intense devotion to God.*

433. Renunciation of Kámini-Kánchana has been rigorously enjoined only for those that lead a monastic life. Monks must not so much as look at the pictures of women. Even the *thought* of spiced pickles causes the mouth to water—not to speak of the sight or the tasting of those dainties!

But this hard rule is not meant for men of the world like thee;—it is intended purely for monks. For thy part thou mayest be amongst women with a mind unattached and fixed upon God. That the mind may be thus unattached, and fixed upon God, it is meet that thou shouldst often retire into solitude—i. e., such a place which is away from either men or women—a place where thou mayest be left absolutely to thyself praying to the Lord with a yearning heart for the True Knowledge. There thou mayest abide in prayers and devotion, with no thought of *Samsára* for at least three days, if not more, or even for at least one day, if not three.

Thy duty, again, as a married man is to live with thy wife as brother and sister after one or two children are born to thee, and then pray to the Lord without

ceasing that both husband and wife may have strength to live a life of spirituality.*

434. The Knowledge of Oneness makes me see that everything is but a manifestation of God the Absolute, on the plane of sense. Thus do I realise that all women are so many forms in which the Divine Mother appears. Thus I revere all women alike;—be it an unchaste woman, or an ideal wife who is an example to others of conjugal love and devotion.*

435. Alas, I look in vain for customers who want anything higher or better than *kolai* pulse! Everybody runs after Kámini-Kânchana! ‡ Few do aspire for higher things! They are attracted by physical beauty,—by money, honours, titles,—not knowing that the Blessed Vision of the Lord—the Divine Beauty—will cause the highest position, even that of Brahmá (the Creator), to appear as a thing not worth one's while to strive for.*

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‡ Lit., Woman and Gold; used in the sense of the World and its attractions which keep individuals tied down to the sense plane.

Of the Jiva and Brahman.

436. What is the relation between the Jiva and the Paramatman, the Individual and Universal Self?

If a piece of timber be thrown across the flowing Ganges, one side of the water will appear to be separated from the other. In the same way, the idea of Ego makes the soul seem distinct from the Supreme Self. Really, there is no division between them.†

437. The Jivatman resides in the heart of man like iron, and Paramatman in the head like a magnet. Evil tendencies keep the iron of Jivatman covered, as with the clay. If this clay of evil tendencies be washed away by the continued pouring of tears of Bhakti, immediately the Paramatman-magnet attracts the Jivatman-iron. †

438. As the water and its bubbles are one,—for the bubble has its birth in water, floats on water, and is ultimately resolved into water.—so the Jivatman and the Paramatman are in essence one and the same. The difference is that while one is finite and small, the other is infinite, while one is dependent, the other is independent.

439. There is the screen of *Maya* between the Jivatman and the Paramatman, and as soon as this is removed,

the meeting of the two takes place. In a certain picture, Rama is depicted as going first, Sita second and Lakshman coming last, during their wanderings in the forest. Here Rama is the Paramatman, and Sita is the screen of *Maya*. So long as she is between them, the brothers have no chance of meeting; but when she stands out of the way, Lakshman can take a look at Rama.†

440. When bound in fetters the soul is the Jiva, when released from them the same thing is Shiva.†

441. Souls are said to be of four different classes: (1) the bound, (2) those aspiring to freedom, (3) the freed, and (4) those who are eternally free. When fish are caught in a net some try to make good their escape. These may be compared to the aspirants after Truth. Those that succeed in getting out of the net are the freed souls. Some are too careful to fall a victim to the tactics of the fisherman. These are eternally free. But there are some who fall into the net without realising their fatal situation. These swim within, settling down in the sediment at the bottom and thinking themselves quite safe. Such are those worldly-minded men who, though immersed in all the illusion of the pursuit of pleasure, feel themselves to be quite at home. To liberated souls, and aspirants after Truth, this life seems like a dark and noisome well.†

442. Toy figures are of three kinds, the first are made of salt, the second of cloth, and the third of stone. Now if these dolls be immersed in water, the first will

dissolve and lose their form, the second will absorb a large quantity of water, but retain their form ; while the third will prove quite impervious. The first figures represent the man who has merged himself in the Universal and All-pervading Self and become one with It. This is the *Muktapurusha.* The second represent the true lover or *Bhakta* who is full of Divine bliss and knowledge. And the third are those worldly men whose minds will not allow even the smallest drop of the Supreme Knowledge to enter.

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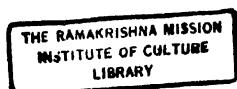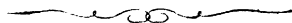
Bhakti—II.

443. Sri Ramakrishna (to Keshav): The members of the Brahmo Samaj—why do they dwell so much upon the glory of God's works? 'O Lord, Thou hast made the sun, the moon, and the stars!' Many are they that are charmed with the beauty of the garden—its glorious flowers and sweetest odours—few seek the Lord of the garden! Which is the greater of the two—the garden or its Lord? Verily the garden is unreal so long as Death stalks in our midst; but the Lord of the garden is the one Reality!

After having taken a few glasses at the bar of a tavern, who cares to inquire how many tons the liquors in the barrels that are there for sale weigh? A single bottle suffices for one.

At the sight of Narendra I am drunken with joy. Never have I asked him, 'Who is thy father?' or 'How many houses has he got of his own?'

Men do value their own goods; they value money, houses, furniture; hence they think that the Lord will view His own works—the sun, moon, stars—in the same light! Men think He would be glad if they spoke highly of His works. *

444. Call with Bhakti upon the hallowed name of the

Lord and the mountain of your sins shall go out of sight; much as a mountain of cotton will burn up and vanish if it but catches one spark of fire.

445. The worship from fear, e. g. of hell-fire is intended for the beginner. Some people look upon the sense of sin as the whole of religion. They forget that it marks only the earliest and a lower stage of spirituality. There is yet a higher ideal, a higher stage of spirituality, viz., the Love of God as our own Father or Mother. *

446. How strong is the influence of Samskara!
In a certain place there were seated some Sannyasins, when a young woman chanced to pass by. All continued as before to meditate upon God, except one person, who looked on her with a glance of his eye. This man who was attracted by female beauty had been formerly a householder, and was the father of three children when he became a Sannyasin. *

447. There are two characteristics of love. First, the world is forgotten. Such love to God as makes one unconscious of external things! Chaitanya Deva "on seeing the forests thought always of Vrindavan and on seeing the sea thought always of the Yamuna." The second sign is that there is no care even for one's own body otherwise so dear; identity with the physical body leaves us altogether. Such love does not come without seeing God. †

448. There are several signs of the attainment of God. There is no delay for him in attaining unto God within whom the glories of affection are becoming manifest.

What are the glories of affection? Discrimination, dispassion, tenderness to all life, service to the good, and love of their company, recounting of God's name and glory, truthfulness,—all these.

449. Seeing all these marks of affection it can be stated with certainty that there will be no delay in seeing God. If a master is about to visit his servant's house, the fact can be understood from the state of the place. The weeds are cut away, soot and cobwebs removed, and the rooms are cleansed. The master himself sends carpet and furniture. When people see these arrive they may safely conclude that the master is coming.

450. A devotee:—Shall we control our senses by discrimination first?

Sri Ramakrishna:—That is also one of the ways, the path of discrimination. In the path of devotion also the control of the internal senses is spontaneously and easily effected. The more a man loves God, the more insipid do sense-pleasures become to him. On the day when a child lies dead, can the minds of its parents, notwithstanding their grief, turn to the pleasures of the body? †

451. A devotee:—I don't see that I love him!

Sri Ramakrishna:—All sins are destroyed by taking His Name. Sense-desire, and anger, all these flee away.

Devotee:—I don't see that I enjoy taking His Name!

Sri Ramakrishna:—Earnestly pray to Him that you may receive the love of His Name. He will Himself fulfil your desire.

452. To become great one must be humble. The nest of the sky-lark ‡ is on the earth below, but it soars high into the sky. High ground is not fit for cultivation; low ground is necessary, that water may stand on it.

453. Our duty is to fall down and adore where others only bow.

454. One should take some trouble to live in the company of the good. At home the talk is always of worldly affairs. The disease there is constant. When a bird is in a cage it utters "Rama! Rama!" but no sooner does it fly back to the jungle than it gives out its own wild note.

455. Mere possession of wealth does not make a man rich. The sign of a rich man's house is that a light burns in each room. The poor cannot afford the oil, therefore they do not arrange for many lights.

This temple of the body should not be kept in darkness; the lamp of knowledge must be lighted in it. "Lighting the lamp of knowledge in your room, look upon the face of the Mother Divine." Everyone can attain to knowledge. The individualised self and the higher Self. Every individual is connected with the higher Self. There is a gas connection in every house, and gas can be had from the Gas Company. Only make application in the proper quarter, and the supply will be arranged. Then you will have gas-light in your room. (laughter)

456. Some are already awake. These have certain marks. They do not care to hear or speak of anything

‡ Châtak.

but what relates to God. Just as the *Chatak* cries for rain-water, though there are Seven Seas, and the Ganges and the Yamuna, and all the other rivers, full of water. Though its throat be parched with thirst, it will drink no other water than the rain.

457. Q. Which is better, devotion with knowledge or a loving devotion?

A. Loving devotion does not come without great love to God and a feeling of such personal possession as 'God is mine.' Three friends were going through a forest, when they saw a tiger. One of them said, "Brothers, our fates are sealed.' Another said, 'Why! why should we die? We have only to pray to God for protection.' But the third said, 'Not at all! Why should we trouble God? Come, let us climb up this tree.'

458. The man who said, 'Our fates are sealed,' did not realise that there was an almighty protector, God. The man who said, 'Let us pray to God for protection,' was wise. He knew that God was the agent in all acts of creation, existence and destruction. And the man who said, 'Why should we trouble God, let us climb up this tree,' had love developed within him. It seems the very nature of a lover to consider himself more powerful than the object of his love. He is always anxious lest the beloved should have trouble. His one desire is that the object of his love may not be so much as pricked by a thorn.†

459. The young and newly married woman remains deeply absorbed in her household duties so long as a child is not born to her. But as soon as she has a son she be-

gins to neglect these details and finds very little pleasure in them. Instead, she fondles the new-born baby the live-long day and kisses it with intense joy. Thus man in his state of ignorance is ever busy in the performance of work, but as soon as the love of God begins to blossom in his heart, he finds no pleasure in other things. Instead of this, his happiness now consists only in serving God and doing His will. His heart turns away from other pursuits and he is unable to withdraw himself from the ecstasy of that Holy Communion.

Single-minded Devotion.

460. A woodcutter led a very miserable life with the small means he could procure by his cutting. Once a Sannyasin wending his way through the forest, saw him at work, and advised him to go deeper into the recesses of the forest, implying that he would be a gainer by doing so. The woodcutter obeyed the direction and proceeded onwards till he came to a sandal-wood forest. He was much pleased with his discovery, and carried away as many sandal-logs as he could, and got a good price for them in the market. Having done this, however, it occurred to him that the good Sannyasin had not told him about the sandal-wood, but had simply advised him to proceed onward into the heart of the forest. So the next day he went farther, passing beyond the sandal-wood forest, till at last he came upon a mine of copper, where he stopped and carried away as much copper as he could to get much money in the market by its sale. Next day without stopping at the copper-mine, he proceeded farther still, as the Sadhu had advised him to do, and came to a silver-mine; and so proceeding farther and farther everyday, he found in turn gold and diamonds, and at last became exceedingly rich. Such is the case with the man who aspires after true knowledge. If he is not stayed in his progress, after attaining a single state, or a few extraordinary powers, he

becomes in the end really rich in the eternal knowledge of Truth.

461. The moth, after seeing the light, never again returns to the darkness. The ant dies in the sugar-heap, but never retreats therefrom. Similarly the lover of God gladly devotes his life to the attainment of Divine bliss, and cares for nothing else.

462. The magnetic needle points always to the north, hence the sailing-vessel does not lose her course. So long as the heart of man is directed towards God, he cannot be lost in the ocean of worldliness.

463. As village-girls in India carry four or five water-pots one upon the other on their heads, talking all the way about their joys and sorrows, without allowing even a drop of water to be spilt, so must the traveller walk in the path of virtue. In whatever circumstances he may be placed, let him always take heed that his heart does not swerve from the true path.

464. As the true wife loves her husband, and the miser his hoarded wealth, so must the devotee love God, with all his heart and soul.

Resignation to the Will of God.

465. What is the nature of absolute reliance ?

It is like that happy state of comfort and satisfaction that is felt by a weary man when, reclining on a pillow, he smokes at leisure after a hard day's toil ; it is the ceasing from all anxiety and worry.

466. The young monkey clings to its mother when she moves about. The kitten on the other hand mews piteously, and the mother grasps it by the neck. If the monkey let go its hold on its mother, it falls and is hurt. This is because it relies upon its own strength. But the kitten runs no such risk, for the mother herself carries it from place to place. Such is the difference between self-reliance and entire resignation to the will of God.

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467. When the blessed Radha was put to the ordeal of proving her chastity by having to fetch water in a jar of a thousand holes and succeeded in doing it, without spilling even a drop, all shouted in their delight, that such a chaste woman never was and never again could be. But Radha exclaimed, "Why do you heap praises on me ? Say rather, 'Glory be to Krishna, glory be to Him alone ;' I have only obeyed Him."

468. Q. What are we to do when we are placed in this world?

A. Give up everything to Him, resign yourself to Him, and your troubles and sorrows will be at an end. Then you will come to know that everything is done by His will alone.

469. For a devotee there is no path safer and smoother than that of *Bakalmá*. *Bakalmá* means resigning the self to the will of the Almighty, to have no consciousness that anything is "mine."

470. If one acquire the conviction that everything is done by God's will, then one becomes only an instrument in the hands of God, then one is free even in this life. "Thou doest Thy work, O Lord, they say, 'I do it.'"

He who can resign himself to the will of the Almighty with simple faith and guileless love, realises God very quickly.

471. A milkmaid had to come from the other side of a river to supply milk to a Brahmana priest. Owing to the irregularities of the ferry, she could not be punctual. Once being rebuked, she explained her difficulty to the Brahmana. The priest said, "But woman, they cross the ocean of existence by the name of God, and canst thou not by the same means cross this little river?" From the very next day, the milk was supplied to the Brahmana in proper time. One day the priest asked the woman, "How is it that now you are no longer late?" She replied, "Since I cross the river as advised by you, by uttering the name of the Lord, I stand in no need of a boatman." The priest

could not believe this and wanted to see it for himself. The woman took him with her and began to walk over the water. The priest also tried to follow her but was soon seen to be sinking. The woman seeing his sad plight said, "How is this, Sir? You are uttering the name of God, but are at the same time taking every care to save your clothes from getting wet? You do not fully rely on the Lord!" Entire resignation and absolute faith in God are at the root of all miraculous deeds.

The Devotee.

472. God, His scripture and His devotee are all to be held as one, that is, to be regarded with equal reverence.

473. Of the many kinds of *siddhas* found in this world, there are,—

(1) The *svapna-siddhas*, who attain perfection by means of dream-inspiration.

(2) The *mantra-siddhas*, who attain perfection by means of some sacred text, or mantram.

(3) The *hathat-siddhas*, who attain perfection suddenly. As a poor man may suddenly become rich by finding a hidden treasure, or by marrying into a rich family, so many ordinary people become pure all of a sudden, and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

(4) The *kripa-siddhas*, who attain perfection through the manifest grace of the Almighty, as a poor man is made wealthy by the kindness of a king.

(5) The *nitya-siddhas*, who are ever-perfect. As the vine of a gourd or pumpkin brings forth first its fruit and then its flower, so the ever-perfect is born a *siddha*, and all his seeming exertions after perfection are merely for the sake of setting an example to humanity.

474. The iron, once converted into gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone, may be kept under the earth or thrown into a rubbish heap. It will still remain gold, and never return to its former condition. Such is his case who has once touched the feet of God. Whether he dwells in the bustle of the world, or in the solitude of the forest, nothing can ever contaminate him again.

475. The steel sword turns into gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone, and though it retains its old form it is no longer capable of piercing any one. Even so, the outward form of him who has touched the feet of God remains unchanged, but he no longer doeth any evil.

476. Does she who has a king for her lover, accept the addresses of a beggar on the streets? So the soul, that has found favour in the sight of the Lord, is without desire for the paltry things of the world.

477. He who has once tasted of sugarcandy, finds no pleasure in the common treacle. He who has slept in a palace, will not care to lie down in a dirty hovel. So the soul that has once tasted the sweetness of the Divine Bliss, finds no delight in the ignoble pleasures of the world.

478. A fable has it that when the star *Svâti* is in the ascendant, the pearl-oyster leaves its bed at the bottom of the sea and comes up to the surface to catch the rainwater. It then floats about, on the surface of the sea, with its mouth agape, till it succeeds in catching a drop of the marvellous *Svâti*-rain. Then it dives down to its bed at the sea-bottom and rests, till it has fashioned a

beautiful pearl out of that precious rain-drop. Similarly does the true and earnest aspirant travel from place to place, in search of that watchword from a perfect preceptor (*Sadguru*), which will open for him the gate of eternal Bliss. And if, in his diligent search, he is fortunate enough to meet such a Guru and get from him the much-longed-for help, that breaks all his fetters, he at once retires from society, and enters into the deep recesses of his own heart, resting there, till he has succeeded in gaining eternal peace.

479. So long as it is on the fire, the milk boils and bubbles. Remove the fire and it is quiet again. So the heart of the neophyte boils with enthusiasm, while he goes on with his spiritual exercises but it soon cools down again without them.

480. Keep thine own faith and sentiment to thyself. If thou talkest about them, thou shalt be a great loser.

481. He has acquired perfection in it who at the time of contemplation is entirely unconscious of everything external.

482. The waters of a swiftly-flowing current move round and round at places in eddies aud whirlpools, but passing these they resume their even course. So even the hearts of the pious fall at times into the whirlpools of despondency and unbelief, but those aberrations are only momentary. They do not last long.

483. A boat may stay in the water, but water should

not stay in the boat. An aspirant may live in the world, but the world should not live in him.

484. The railway engine drags easily with it a train of heavy-laden carriages. So the loving child of God by his faith and devotion experiences no trouble in passing through life in spite of all its trouble and anxiety, and at the same time leads many along with him to God.

485. Unless one becomes as simple as a child, one cannot reach divine illumination. Give up your vanity about the worldly knowledge you have acquired, and know it to be futile in the realm of higher truth. Be as simple as a child, and then only you will reach the knowledge of the True.

486. The new-born calf looks lively, blithe, and merry. It jumps and frisks all day long, stopping now and then to suck sweet milk from its mother. But no sooner is the rope tied about its neck than it begins to pine away, and, far from being merry, wears a dejected and sorry look. So long as a boy has no concern with the affairs of the world he is as merry and full of high hopes as the day is long. But as soon as he takes up the responsibilities of a man of family, he is weighed down by their burden and feels himself unfitted for the higher attainments of life.

487. As dry leaves are blown hither and thither by the wind, without any choice of their own, so those who depend upon God move in harmony with His will, and leave themselves in His hands with perfect non-resistance.

488. Shallow water in an open field dries up in time, even if unused. So a sinner is sometimes purified by resigning himself absolutely to the infinite mercy and grace of God.

489. One fine morning in June, a kid was playing near its mother, and told her with a leap of joy that it intended, in November, to feast on *Rása* flowers.‡ "Ah, my child," replied the mother, "that is not so easy as you seem to think. You must pass through many dangers before you can hope to feast on *Rása* flowers. The interval between the coming September and October is not very auspicious for you! Some one may carry you off to be sacrificed to the Goddess Durga. Then you will have to get through the time of Kali-puja; and if you are fortunate enough to survive that period, there is still Jagaddhatri-puja, when almost all that remain, of the male members of our tribe, are sacrificed. If your good luck carries you safely through all these crises, then alone you may hope to feast on *Rása* flowers, in the beginning of November." Like the goat in the fable, we should not hastily approve of all our youthful aspirations or let ourselves be carried away by them, taking into account the manifold crises which we shall have to pass through, in the course of the higher realisations of our lives.

‡ Flowers used for the decoration on a *Rása-lilá* scene.

Jnana.

490. When a thorn pierces the flesh, one extracts it with another, and then throws the two away. So 'relative' knowledge alone can remove that 'relative' ignorance which blinds the eye of the Self. But such knowledge and such ignorance are both alike included in Nescience; hence the man who attains to the highest *Jnana*, the knowledge of the Absolute, does away in the end with both knowledge and ignorance, being free himself from all duality.

491. What is *Jnana* or knowledge, in the highest sense? Says the wise man, *Jnani*, "Oh Lord, Thou alone dost act, in all this universe. I am but the smallest of tools in Thine hand. Nothing is *mine*. All is *Thine*. Myself, my family, my riches, my virtues, all alike are *Thine*." *

492. The number of those who attain to divine wisdom is very limited. Thus in the Gita it says, "In thousands of men one perchance strives for perfection: and maybe one among these blessed, striving thus, comes to know Me in reality."

493. The more his attachment to the world, the less is a man likely to attain *Jnana*. The less his attachment to

the world, the more is the probability of his gaining *Jnana.*

494. A disciple—The pressure of work stands in the way of giving one's mind to God, does it not?

Master—O yes, no doubt that is so, but a *Jnani* may work unattached, and then work would not do any harm to him. If you sincerely desire, the Lord will help you, so that the bondage of work shall gradually fall away. *

495. *Jnana-yoga* means communion with God by means of *Jnana.* The *Jnani's* object is to realise Brahman, the Absolute. He says 'Not this,' 'Not this,' and thus leaves out of account one unreal thing after another until he gets to a point where all *vichara* (discrimination) between the real and the unreal ceases, and the Absolute Brahman is realised in *Samadhi.**

496. If you ask whether there is any difference between the *Jnanis* who live in the world and those who renounce it, I would say that the two are the same. They have *Jnana,* the same thing, in common. But if the *Jnani* be in the world he has cause for fear; for living in the midst of sense-attraction there is fear, though it may be slight. If you live in a sooty room, however careful you be, you are sure to become a little blackened by the soot.

497. Jnana-yoga is exceedingly difficult in this age, Kali-Yuga.

In the first place, our life here and now depends upon food. It is *Annagata Prana.*

Secondly, the term of human life is much too short for such a purpose.

Thirdly, it is almost impossible to get rid of the illusion that the Self is one with the body,—*Dehabuddhi* as it is called—which clings to us. Thus we can only understand in an intellectual fashion that the conclusion which the *Jnani* has to come to is, "I am not the body, I am one with the Universal Soul. I am that Being which is absolute and unconditioned. Not being identified with the body, neither am I subject to the necessities of the body, such as hunger and thirst, birth and death, disease and the rest."

One who is subject to these necessities, and yet calls himself a *Jnani* is like a man suffering from intense pain because his hand is torn by thorns, who persists in saying, nevertheless, "My hand is neither scratched nor bleeding. All is well with it."

This kind of talk will not do. First of all these thorns must be burnt to ashes by the fire of *Jnana*. *

498. *Jnana* varies in degree and kind. There is first the *Jnana* or insight of ordinary mortals, men of the world. This knowledge is not sufficiently powerful. It may be compared to the flame of a lamp which can only illuminate the interior of a room. The *Jnana* of a *Bhakta* is a stronger light, like that of the moon, causing things to be visible outside the chamber, as well as within it. But the *Jnana* of the *Avatara*, the Incarnation of God, is vastly beyond even this, and may rather be compared to the light of the sun. He is indeed the sun of divine knowledge, whose light dispels the accumulated darkness and ignorance of ages.*

499. If you keep newly churned butter in a new

earthen pot, there is no chance of its getting bad; but if you put it in the pot in which whey has been kept, then you may rightly be anxious about it When paddy is fried, a few grains spring out of the pan as spotless in colour as the *mallikâ* flower. What remain may also be good, but alas, they are not spotless! If the Sannyasin who has renounced the world attains to *Jnana*, he becomes spotless as the *mallikâ* flower; but if one remain in the frying-pan of this world after the attainment of *Jnana*, one may acquire from it a little taint.

Jnana and Bhakti.

500. The Knowledge of God may be likened to a man, while the Love of God is like a woman. Knowledge has entry only to the outer rooms of God, and none can enter into His mysteries save only a lover, for none but a woman has access to the inner chambers.

501. The Jnana-Yogi longs to realise Brahman—God the Impersonal, the Absolute and the Unconditioned.

But, as a general rule, such a soul would do better, in this present age, to love, pray, and surrender himself entirely to God. The Lord loves His devotee and will vouchsafe to him even Brahma-Jnana if the *Bhakta* hungers and thirsts after it.

Thus the Jnana-Yogi will attain *Jnana* as well as *Bhakti*. It will be given to him to realise Brahman. He will also, the Lord willing, realise the Personal God of the *Bhakta*.

The *Bhakta*, on the other hand, will generally be content to see and realise the Personal God, the *Saguna Brahman* of the Upanishads. Yet the Lord makes him the heir of His infinite glories, grants to him *Bhakti* as well as *Jnana*, and gives to him the realisation of God Personal as well as of God Impersonal.

For if one can manage to reach Calcutta shall he not succeed in finding his way to the Maidan, the Ochterlony Monument, the Museum, and other sights, and in knowing which is which ?

502. Only come to my Divine Mother and you will receive not only *Bhakti* if you will, but also Jnana. You will see Her not only in *Bhâva-Samâdhi*, manifesting Herself in *Sâkâra-Rupa*, Forms Divine, but you will also realise Her as Brahman the Absolute, in that *Nirvikalpa-Samadhi* in which all self is effaced and there is no manifestation whatsoever, even of the Divine Forms, for it is Nirâkara-Rupa transcending all idea of form.*

503. Pure knowledge and pure love are both one and the same. Pure knowledge leads to the same goal which is reached by pure devotion (Bhakti).

504. Let a *Bhakta* pray to God and it will be given to him to realise the Impersonal God, Brahman, in *Samadhi* and thus reach the goal of *Jnana-Yoga* also.

505. Bhakti-Yoga and not Jnana-Yoga or Karma-Yoga is the *Yuga-dharma* of this age. This means that *Jnana-Vichara*, the discrimination of God, the only reality, from the unreal universe, and Karma, work without attachment, are far more difficult than Bhakti-Yoga in this age as a method or road leading to God. It does not mean that the goal is different.*

506. Here is a Pauranic story which reconciles Jnana and Bhakti. Once Ramchandra, God incarnate, said to

his great Bhakta Hanumân,—'My son, tell Me in what relation you regard Me, and how you meditate upon Me.'

The Bhakta replied, "O Rama, at times I worship Thee as *Purna*, the one undivided. Then I look upon myself as *amsa*, a part, a fragment as it were, of that Divinity. At other times I meditate upon Thee, O Rama, as my Divine Master and think of myself only as Thy servant. When however I am blessed, O Rama, with *tattva-jnana*, or true knowledge, I see, I realise that I am Thou and Thou art I."*

507. Were Narada and others *Bhaktas* only and not *Jnanis* too?

Narada and others had attained the highest knowledge, Brahma-jnana. But still they went on like the murmuring waters of the rivulet to talk and sing. They were *Jnanis*, but they talked and sang about the Lord with the good of others in view.

508. The light, in such Incarnations as Chritanya Deva, who are distinguished by both *Bhakti* and *Jnana*, strictly so-called, is like the blended light of the sun and moon, rising in their full glory at one and the same time. Such power of mind is exceedingly rare.

509. The Jnana-Yogi says, 'I am He.' But so long as one has the idea of the Self as body, this egoism is injurious. It cannot make one progress and brings ruin. He deceives himself and others.*

510. My Divine Mother (the Personal phase of Brahman) has declared that She is the Brahman of the Vedanta. It is within Her power to give *Brahma-jnana*

which She does by causing the effacement of the lower self.

Thus in the first place you may come to Brahman through *Vichara*, my Mother willing. Again you may come through *Bhakti*. Prayer without ceasing, for light and for love, and self-surrender to Her are the elements of *Bhakti*. First come to my Divine Mother (the Personal God) through these.

Take my word for it that if your prayer is *ántarika* (comes from the bottom of your heart), my Mother will respond to it, if you will only *wait*. Pray to Her again if you want to realise Her Impersonal Self. Should She deign to grant your prayer—for She is omnipotent—you will be in a position to realise Her Impersonal Self in *Samadhi*. This is precisely the same thing as *Brahma-jnana*.*

511. It is not for me to bless. It is for the Divine Mother to do so. All blessings come from Her. Let thy prayers be offered up to Her, of Bliss everlasting. *

512. Suppose there is an infinite expanse of water—water above, water beneath, water in all directions. At certain times of the year this water freezes with cold and again when the days are warm it thaws and becomes water.

Brahman is like the infinite expanse of water. Those parts that are frozen into ice are the spiritual Personal Forms of the Deity. The cold is the *Bhakti* of the devotee, his love, his devotion, his self-surrender. The heat again is *Jnana-Vichára* (discrimination between the real and the unreal phenomenal universe) leading up to *nirvikalpa-samadhi*, the total effacement of the self which says "I," "I."

To a *Bhakta* the Lord manifests Himself in various forms. To one who reaches the height of *Brahma-jnana* in *Samadhi*, He is the *Nirguna Brahman* once more, Formless, *nirâkarâ*, Unconditioned.

Herein is the reconciliation between *Jnana* and *Bhakti*.*

513. Master: The love for God is of two kinds. First, the Bhakti which is enjoined by the Shastras. We are to worship in a certain way or repeat the name of the Lord so many times. All this belongs to Vaidhi-Bhakti, i. e., the Bhakti according to the Law. It may lead to Brahmajnanam, or the Knowledge of the Absolute in Samadhi. The self is thus merged in the Universal Soul never to come back. This is the case with ordinary devotees.

But it is different with Divine Incarnations and those that are the Lord's own. Their Love for God is not made up of mere scriptural formulæ. It springs from within! It wells up from the Soul! Divine Incarnations (like Chaitanya) and those that are nearest to Him, have within their reach Absolute Knowledge in Samadhi, and at the same time may come down from that height retaining their self and loving the Lord as Father, Mother, &c. Saying, 'Not this,' 'Not this,' they leave behind them the steps of the staircase one after another until they get up to the roof. Reaching there, they say, 'It is this.' But soon they find out that the staircase is made of the same materials—brick, lime and brickdust—as the roof itself. So they walk up and down, sometimes resting on the roof and sometimes on the steps of the staircase.

The roof symbolises the Absolute realised in Samadhi in which the self responding to the sense-world is blotted

out. The staircase is the phenomenal world—the world of names and forms—which after the Root has been reached, is realised as the manifestation, to human sense, of the Absolute.*

514. A certain person said to Ravana, "Why can you not approach Sitâ assuming the form of Rama—her beloved husband?" Ravana replied, "My friend, if I once meditate upon that Divine Form—Tilottamâ and other beauties appear to me like ashes of the dead scattered on the cremation ground! In that moment of ecstasy I can spurn the highest position of the Creator if offered to me, what to speak of winning a woman with all her charms!*

515. Q. Unless one covers their eyes, the untrained horses will not move a single step. Is it possible to realise God, unless one's passions are kept under control?

Master: Thou speakest of Jnana-yoga, the Path of Knowledge or Discrimination which leadeth to God. The Knowing One says, 'One must first be pure if one desires to see God. One must first control one's passions. First Self-discipline, then Knowledge of God.'

There is another path leading to God,—the Path of Devotion (Bhakti-yoga). Once there comes in the human soul the Love of God, once the chanting of His Holy Name fills the devotee with joy, no effort is needed for the control of the passions. Such control cometh of itself.

Can a man troubled with grief be in a mood to enter into a quarrel, or to join a feast, or to give his mind up to pleasures of the senses?

516. Does the "rainy-weather insect" ‡ seek darkness once it has seen the light?

Doctor (smiling): O, it does not,—it will rather rush upon the flame, and perish.

Master: That is not so with the true worshipper of God. The Living Light to which he is drawn doth not burn and cause death. It is like the light of a gem, shining yet soft, cool and soothing. It burns not but illumines the heart with Peace and Joy.*

517. Verily these customers (of the world) seek for *kalai* pulse (meaning a worthless commodity). It is given to pure souls alone, who have not touched the world, to love God alone—to have One Aim,—to have the mind fixed upon the Lord.*

518. Knowledge relating to God keeps pace with faith. Where there is little faith it is idle to look for much knowledge.*

519. (To Narendra): So long as one goes on questioning and reasoning about God, one has not seen Him as a Reality.*

‡ An ant which develops wings and flies about after or before a heavy fall of rain.

Faith and Longing.

520. Spiritual practices (Sadhanas) are absolutely necessary for Self-knowledge, but if there be perfect faith, then a little practice is enough.

Vyasa was about to cross the river Jamuna. At this moment the Gopis arrived. They also wished to cross, but there was no ferry-boat. They asked Vyasa, "Master, what shall we do?" Vyasa replied: "Do not worry, I will get you across the river; but I am very hungry. Can you give me something to eat?" The Gopis had with them a quantity of milk, cream, and fresh butter which they offered him and he consumed them. The Gopis then asked: "What about crossing the river?" Vyasa stood near the edge of the water and prayed: "O Jamuna! If I have not eaten anything to-day, by that virtue I ask thee to divide the waters, so that we can walk across thy bed and reach the other side." No sooner did he utter these words than the waters parted and the dry bed was laid bare. The Gopis were amazed. They thought: "How could he say, '*If* I have not eaten anything to-day,' when just now he had eaten so much?" They did not see that this was the proof of the firm faith Vyasa had, that *he* did not eat anything, but that the Lord who dwelt within him was the real Eater.*

521. Extreme longing is the surest way to God-vision. One should have faith like that of an innocent child and such longing as a child has when it wants to see its mother.

There was a boy named Jatila. He used to go to school alone through the woods. Often he felt lonely and afraid. He told his mother about it and she said to him: "Why art thou fearful, my child? Thou must call Krishna when thou art frightened." "Who is Krishna, mother?" the boy asked. The mother answered: "Krishna is thy brother." After that when Jatila was passing through the woods alone and felt frightened, he called aloud, "Brother Krishna!" When no one came he called again: "O Brother Krishna, where art thou? Come to me and protect me; I am frightened." Hearing the call of this faithful child, Krishna could no longer remain away. He appeared in the form of a young boy and said: "Here am I, thy brother! Why art thou frightened? Come with me, I will take thee to school." Then having escorted him to school, Lord Krishna said to him: "I will come to thee whenever thou callest me; do not be afraid."

Such is the power of true faith and true longing.*

522. Cry unto the Lord with a longing and yearning heart, and then thou shalt see Him. People would shed a jugful of tears for the sake of their wife and children! They would drown themselves in a flood of tears for the sake of money! But who crieth for the Lord? *

523. As the rosy dawn cometh before the rising sun, so is a longing and yearning heart the forerunner of the glorious vision of God.*

524. There was a certain Brâhman priest who served in a household chapel. Once he went away leaving the charge of the service to his little son. He told the boy to place the daily offering of food before the Deity and see that He ate it. The boy following the injunctions of his father, placed the offering before the image and silently waited. But the image neither spoke nor ate. The boy watched for a long time. He had firm faith that the Deity would come down from the altar, take the seat before the offering and eat it. Then he prayed: "O Lord, come and eat; it is getting very late, I cannot wait any longer." But the Lord did not speak. Then the boy began to cry, saying: "Lord, my father told me to see that Thou didst eat the offering. Why dost thou not come? Thou comest to my father and eatest his offering. What have I done that Thou dost not come to me and eat my offering?" He cried bitterly and for a long time. Then as he looked up at the seat, he saw the Deity in a human form eating the offering! When the service was ended and the boy came out, the members of the household said to him, "If the service is over, bring out the offering. The boy replied: "Yes, but the Lord has eaten everything." In amazement they asked: "What did you say?" With absolute innocence the boy repeated: "Why, the Lord has eaten all that I offered." Then they entered the chapel and were dumbfounded at the sight of the empty dishes.

Such is the power of true faith and true yearning! *

525. Once a man's son lay at the point of death and none could help him. A Sadhu however said: "There is but one hope. If you can get the venom of a cobra

mixed with a few drops of rain-water fallen under the constellation of the Swati star in a human skull, your son's life will be saved by it." The father looked and found that the constellation of the Swati would be in the ascendant on the morrow; so he prayed, saying, "O Lord, do Thou make possible all these conditions and spare the life of my son." With extreme earnestness and longing in his heart, he set out on the following evening and searched diligently in a deserted spot for a human skull. At last he found one under a tree and watched, praying. Suddenly a shower came on and a a few drops of rain lodged in the upturned skull. He said to himself: "Now I have the water in the skull under the right constellation." Then he prayed earnestly: "Grant, Lord, that the rest may also come." In a short time he discovered a toad not far from the skull, and he prayed again. Then from the grass sprang a cobra to snatch the toad, but at that moment the toad jumped over the skull and the venom of the cobra fell into it. With overwhelming gratitude the anxious father cried out: "Lord, by Thy grace all impossible things are possible. Now I know that my son's life will be saved." Therefore I say, if you have true faith and earnest longing, you will get everything by the grace of the Lord.*

Advaita.

526. The Master said: 'Everything that exists is God,' and the disciple understood this literally. Passing along the road, he met an elephant. The driver (mahut) shouted from his high place, 'Move away, move away!' But the disciple thought, 'Why should I move away? I am God and so is the elephant. What fear can God have of Himself?' Thinking thus he did not move. At last the elephant took him up by his trunk, and dashed him aside. He was severely hurt, and going back to his master, he told his story. The master said, 'It is quite true that you are God. It is true that the elephant is God too, but God was also in the form of the elephant-driver. Why did you not listen to the God on top?"

527. Knowledge leads to unity, and ignorance to diversity.

528. You can do whatever you like after making the knowledge of Oneness your own.

529. Q. God is infinite, and the creature or Jiva a finite being. How then can the finite grasp the Infinite?

A. The soul is like a doll made of salt that tries to fathom the depths of the ocean. In doing so it is dissolved and lost. Even so, the soul in trying to measure God, loses his individual egoism and becomes one with Him.

Visishtadvaitavada.

530. Master: I do actually *see* that *whatever is, is God.* It is He who has become all these things! There is a a stage at which the mind and Buddhi are lost in the Absolute—which cannot be conceived as made up of parts.

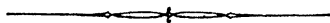
Thereupon at the end of Samadhi I must come down at least two notes below the highest note in the scale before I can utter another word!

Vedanta has been explained by Sankara. Another point of view is that of the Visishtadvaita of Ramanuja.

Narendra (to Master): Sir, may I ask what is the *Visishtadvaitavada?*

Master (to Narendra): This doctrine holds that the Absolute (Brahman) must not be considered apart from the world (Jagat) and the soul (Jiva). The three between them form one—three in one and one in three!

Let us take a *Bilva* fruit. Let the shell, the seeds and the kernel be kept separate. Now suppose somebody wanted to know the weight of the fruit. Surely it would not do to weigh only the kernel of the fruit. The shell, the seeds and the kernel are all weighed with a view to knowing the real weight of the fruit. No doubt we reason at the outset that the all-important thing is the *kernel,* and not either the shell or the seeds. In the next place we go on reasoning, saying that the shell and

the seeds belong to the same substance to which the kernel belongs. At the first stage of the reasoning we say, 'Not this,' 'Not this.' Thus the Absolute is not-soul (not the finite individual soul). Again, It is not the world either. The Absolute is the only Reality, all else is unreal. At the next stage we go a little further. We see that the kernel belongs to the same substance as that to which the shell and the seeds belong. Hence the substance from which we derive our negative conception of the 'Absolute' is the identical substance from which we derive our conception of the finite soul and the phenomenal world. Your 'Relative' (*Lilá*) must be traced to that very Being to which your 'Absolute' (*Nitya*) must be traced. Hence, as Ramanuja says, the Absolute is qualified by the finite soul and the phenomenal world. This is the doctrine of Visishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism).*

How to Realise God.

531. What offering is required, to attain to God?
To find God, thou must offer to Him thy body, mind, and riches.

532. Adopt adequate means for the end you seek to attain. You cannot get butter by crying yourself hoarse, "There is butter in the milk!" If you wish to make butter, you must turn the milk into curds, and churn it well. Then alone you can get butter. So if you long to see God, practise spiritual exercises. What is the use of merely crying "Lord! Lord!"?

533. A householder devotee: Sir, we have heard that you have seen God. So please make us see Him also. How can one make acquaintance with the Lord?
Sri Ramakrishna: Everything depends upon the will of the Lord. Work is necessary for God-vision. If you merely sit on the shore of a lake and say: "There are fish in this lake," will you catch any? Go and get the things necessary for fishing; get a rod and line and bait and throw some lure into the water. Then from the deep water the fish will rise and come near and you will be able to see and catch them. You wish me to show you God while you sit quietly by, without making the least

effort! You would have me set the curds, churn the butter and hold it before your mouth! You ask me to catch the fish and place it in your hands! How unreasonable!

534. If a man desires to seek the king in his palace, he will have to go to the palace and pass through all the gates; but if after entering the outermost gate he exclaims, "Where is the King?" he will not find him. He must go on through the seven gates and then he will see the King.*

535. Q. By what kind of work can God be attained?
A. There is no difference in work. Do not think that this work will lead to God and that will not.

Everything depends upon His grâce. To have His grace, whatever work you perform, do it with sincerity and earnest longing. Through His grace environments will be favourable and the conditions of Realisation will become perfect. If you want to renounce the world and your family depends upon you, perhaps your brother will assume its responsibility for you. Perhaps your wife will not hinder you in your spiritual life, but will rather help you; or perhaps you will not marry at all and will not be attached to the world in any way.*

536. A certain pious man used constantly to count the beads of a rosary for years, silently uttering the name of the Deity (Ishta Deva). To him the Bhagavan said, "Why do you stick to one place? Go forward." The pious man replied—"I cannot do so without His grace." The Bhagavan said, "His grace is blowing night and day

over thy head. Unfurl the sails of thy boat, if thou wantest to make rapid progress through the ocean of life."

537. Pray to Him in any way you will. He is sure to hear you, for He hears even the footfall of an ant.

538. Verily, verily, I say unto you that he who *wants* Him finds Him. Go and verify it in thine own life; try for three days and thou art sure to succeed.

In this Kali Yuga, even three days are enough to make a man perfect.*

539. Thou wilt see God if thy love for Him is as strong as that of the attachment of the worldly-minded person for things of the world.*

540. There are pearls in the deep sea, but one must hazard all to find them. If diving once do not bring you pearls, you need not therefore conclude that the sea is without them. Dive again and again. You are sure to be rewarded in the end. So is it with the finding of the Lord in this world. If your first attempt prove fruitless, do not lose heart. Persevere in your efforts. You are sure to realise Him at last.

541. The angler who is anxious to catch the large and beautiful Rohita fish, will wait calmly for hours together, having thrown his bait and hook into the water, watching patiently, till it is caught by the fish. In like fashion, the devotee who goes on patiently with his devotions, is sure to find his God at last.

542. Standing beside a pool covered with weeds and

scum, one would say there was no water in it. To see the water, one must remove the scum from the surface of the pond. Even so, with eyes covered over with the film of Maya, you complain that you cannot see God. If you would see Him, you must first put away the film of Maya from off your eyes.

543. God cannot be seen so long as we keep the slightest taint of desire. Therefore satisfy your small desires, and renounce the great, by means of right reasoning and discrimination.

544. No one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven if there be the least trace of desire in him, just as a thread can never enter the eye of a needle if there be any slight detached fibre at its end.

545. Meditate on God, in a quiet corner, or in the solitude of the forests, or within your own mind.

546. Viveka (Discrimination) and Vairagya (Renunciation) are the two great purifying agents for the soul. *

547. These are the stages of *Sádhana* (devotional practice) for the purification of the soul :—

1st. *Sádhu-sanga*, i. e., the company of holy men.

2nd. *Shraddhá*, or faith and devotion to things relating to the Spirit.

3rd. *Nishthá*, or single-minded devotion to one's ideal.

4th. *Bhakti*, or intense love for God.

5th. *Bháva*, i. e., the state of being struck speechless at the thought of God.

6th. *Mahábháva*: When *Bháva* is intensified, it is called *Mahábháva*. The devotee sometimes laughs, sometimes weeps, like a madman. He has completely conquered the flesh and has no consciousness of his body. This stage is not attained by Jivas in general, but by Mahápurushas, or Incarnations of God only.

7th. *Prema*, i. e., the most intense love to God. It goes hand in hand with Mahâbhâva. The two marks of this stage are, first, the forgetfulness of this world; second, a forgetfulness of self, which includes one's own body. This brings the devotee face to face with God, and he thus attains the Goal of life.+

Atma-jnana.

548. On the rolling plain seeing the lowly grass and the mighty tree one says, 'How large is the tree and how tiny is the grass!' But when he ascends the mountain and looks from its high peak to the plains below, the mighty tree and the lowly grass blend into one indistinct mass of green. So, in the sight of worldly men, there are differences of rank and position, but when the Divine sight is opened there remains no distinction of the high and the low.

549. The snake is very venomous. It bites if one happens to come near it. But the man who has learnt snake-charming can not only catch a snake, but can carry about several on his person like so many ornaments. Similarly, he who has acquired spiritual knowledge can never be polluted by lust and greed.

550. When a man realises one of the following states he becomes perfect:—(1) All this am I; (2) All this art Thou; (3) Thou art the Master, and I am the servant.

551. The soul under a spell is 'Jiva' (man): free from enchantment it is 'Shiva' (God).

552. He alone is a true man, who is illumined with the light of true knowledge. Others are men in name only.

553. When a nail pierces through the shell of a green cocoa-nut it enters the kernel of the nut too. But in the dry nut, the kernel is separated from the shell, and so when the shell is pierced, the kernel is not touched. Jesus was like the dry nut, his inner soul was separate from his exterior shell, and consequently the sufferings of the body did not affect him.

554. There are two egos—one mature and the other immature. "Nothing is mine that I see, feel or hear. Nay, this very body itself is not mine. I am the eternal, the free, the all-knowing"—the ego that has this idea is mature, while the immature ego is that which thinks, "This is my house, my child, or my wife."

555. When a storm is raging, it is impossible to distinguish between a pipul (Asvattha) tree and a banyan (Vata) tree. So, when the storm of true knowledge sweeps over a man, he can make no distinction of caste.

556. A jar kept in water is filled with water inside and out. Thus the soul immersed in God sees the all-pervading Spirit within and without.

557. So long as there is egoism, neither self-knowledge (Jnana) nor liberation (Mukti) is possible and no cessation of birth and death.

558. Every being is Nârâyana, the Lord Himself. Man and animal, sage and knave, nay, the whole universe is Nârâyana, the Supreme Spirit.

559. Humanity must die before divinity manifests itself. But this divinity must, in turn, die, before the higher manifestation of the Blissful Mother (*Brahmamayi*) takes place. It is on the bosom of dead divinity (Shiva) that the Blissful Mother dances Her dance celestial.

560. The knowers of God sometimes live and appear like lunatics, drunkards, or children.

561. As a drunkard will sometimes put his coat on his head or at another time use it as breeches, at one time use his cloth as a turban, and at another time carry it about like a bundle, so the God-intoxicated man is not conscious of the external world.

562. Mysterious is that sacred seat, where there is neither teacher nor pupil. *Brahma-jnana*, God-knowledge, is that state of oneness where remains no distinction between Guru and disciple.

563. As soft clay can take an impression, but not so burnt earth or stone, so also Divine Wisdom impresses itself on the heart of a loving devotee, but not on those of the bound souls, burnt up by worldly desires.

564. When camphor is burnt, no residue is left. When discrimination ends, and formless Samadhi is attained, there is neither I, nor thou, nor this universe ; for this mind and all its egotism are merged in the absolute Brahman. †

565. Once a Sannyasini came to the royal court of

Janaka. To her the king bowed, without looking at her face. Seeing this the Sannyasini said: "How strange it is, O Janaka, that you have still so much fear of woman! When one attains to full *Jnana*, one's nature becomes like that of a little child,—one sees no distinction between male and female.†

566. But these slight spots that cling to the *Jnani* in this world do not matter much. The moon has spots but that never interferes with her giving light. †

567. He whose rare good fortune it is to be favoured with one side-glance of love from the Lord, becomes blessed at once with Divine Wisdom (Jnana).*

568. In what condition of the mind does God-vision take place?

God is seen when the mind is tranquil. When the sea of the mind is agitated by the wind of desires, it cannot reflect God, and then God-vision is impossible.

569. As a piece of lead, thrown into a basin of mercury, is soon dissolved, so the human soul loses its individual existence when it dives into the ocean of Brahman.

570. Pointing to the heart, the Bhagavan used to say: "He who has it here, has it also there (pointing to the external world). He who does not find God within himself will never find Him outside himself. But he who sees Him in the temple of his soul, sees Him also in the temple of the universe."

571. Q. What are the indications of God's advent in the human heart?

A. As the dawn heralds the rising sun, so unselfishness, purity and righteousness precede the advent of the Lord.

572. Iron, if once converted into gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone, may be kept under the ground, or thrown into a rubbish heap; it always remains gold and will never return to what it was before. Such is the state of him whose heart has once touched the feet of the Almighty. Whether he dwells in the bustle of the world or in the solitude of the forest, nothing will ever contaminate him.

573. A perfect man is like a lotus leaf in the water, or like a mud-fish living in the marsh. Neither of these is polluted by the element in which it dwells.

574. That knowledge which purifies the intellect is the true knowledge, everything else is non-knowledge

575. Unshod and with bare feet who will venture to walk on thorns and sharp stones? Shod with Divine wisdom (*Tattvajnana*) what thorns or sharp stones of the world can harm you?

576. Tying up in thy garment the knowledge of Advaita (oneness or non-duality), do thou whatever thou wilt!

577. Good and evil cannot bind him who has realised the oneness of nature and himself with Brahman.

578. He is truly an *Atmajnani*, a knower of the Self, who is dead even in this life, that is to say, whose passions and desires have all been destroyed as they would be in a dead body.

579. Once a God-intoxicated *Sadhu* came to the Kali temple of Rani Rashmoni, where Sri Ramakrishna lived. One day he received no food, but, though feeling hungry, he did not ask for any. Seeing a dog eating the remnants of a feast thrown away in a corner, he went there and embracing the dog, said,—" Brother, how is it that thou eatest alone, without giving me a share?" So saying, he began to eat along with the dog. Having finished his meal in this strange company, the sage entered the temple of Mother Kali and prayed with such an ecstasy of devotion, as to send a thrill throughout the temple. When, after ending his prayers he was going to leave, Sri Ramakrishna asked his cousin Hridoy to watch and follow the man, and to communicate to him what he might say. Hridoy followed him for some distance, when the sage turning round, enquired,—" Why followest thou me?" Hridoy said, "Sir! Give me some teaching!" The sage replied, " When the water of this ditch and yonder glorious Ganges appear as one and the same in thy sight, when the sound of this flageolet and the noise of that crowd have no distinction to thine ear, then thou shalt reach the state of true knowledge." When Hridoy returned and told this to the Bhagavan, he remarked,—" That man has reached the true state of ecstasy, the true state of knowledge The *Siddhas* roam about like children or unclean spirits or even like mad men. Indeed they wander in many disguises."

580. Q. What is the state which a *Siddha* attains?

A. A potato or a brinjal when *siddha*, i. e., when properly boiled, becomes soft and pulpy. So a man when he becomes a *Siddha*, when he reaches perfection, is seen to be all humility and tenderness. (A perfect man and well-cooked food are both called *Siddha*. There is a pun here on the word *Siddha*.)*

581. As the cloud covers the sun, so Maya conceals God. When the cloud moves away, the sun is seen; so when Maya is removed, God becomes manifest.

582. "This is gold, this is brass,"—is ignorance. "Everything is gold"—is knowledge.

583. God cannot be seen so long as lust and love of wealth are not extinguished.

584. Without speaking truth, man cannot find God who is the essence of Truth.

585. Beyond the depth of understanding even to Brahmá and the Devas is the mysterious working of that key which opens the chamber of God. To reach Him, you have to renounce yourself and the world.

586. A thief enters a dark room and feels the various articles therein. He puts his hand upon a table perhaps, and saying, "not this," he passes on; he comes in contact with some other article, may be, a chair, and again he says, "not this," and continues his search. Thus he leaves one thing after another till he finally lays his hand

on the box containing the treasure; and then he exclaims, "It is here!" and his search ends. Such is indeed the search after Brahman.

587. As a rope that is burnt retains its form intact, yet nothing can be bound with it; so the man burnt by the fire of *Jnana* retains merely the form of egoism without its binding qualities.

588. As the sun is not reflected in muddy water, so Self-knowledge does not manifest itself in the heart of the devotee so long as there is *Máyá* or the idea of "I" and "mine" in it.

589. God can never never appear,
Where there are aversion, shame and fear.

590. Indulgence in futile talks and criticism concerning others, only distract the mind and make one forgetful of the contemplation of the Self or *Paramátman*.

591. Only two kinds of people can attain to Self-knowledge; those whose minds are not encumbered at all with learning, that is to say, not overcrowded with thoughts borrowed from others, and those who, after studying all the scriptures and sciences, have come to realise that they know nothing.

592. In the kingdom of God, reason, intellect and learning are of no avail. There the dumb speak, the blind see, and the deaf hear.

593. There are various grades of knowledge. There

is first the knowledge that comes through discrimination. The knowledge that results from concentration is of another kind. And revelation, or the knowledge which comes direct from Him is again quite different. This, indeed, is the Truth itself.

594. It is not possible to go to excess and injure oneself by absorption in God. The rays of the diamond soothe and illumine but never destroy.*

595. To one said the Bhagavân: Ah! Ah! You have come to seek God when the best of your life has been spent in the world. Had you entered the world after realising God, what peace and joy you would have found!

596. The Highest Learning, *Parávidyá*, is the knowledge of God. All else, mere Shastras, philosophy, logic, or grammar, as such only load and bewilder the mind. The Scriptures or *Granthas* are sometimes *Granthis* or knots! They are good only when they lead to *Paravidya*, the Highest Learning.*

597. When a thorn runs into your foot, you take it out with another thorn, and having done so, you throw them both away. So relative knowledge or Vidyâ is necessary to remove relative ignorance or Avidyá, which blinds the eyes of the self. But before a man can attain the highest Jnana he must do away with both of them. For, God or Brahman is above and beyond both knowledge and ignorance, above and beyond all relativity.

598. *Anandam* or enjoyment of perfect bliss within, is one of the signs of God-vision. The waves roll over

the surface of the ocean, but the deep expanse of water lies unruffled beneath.

599. He who has seen God roams about,—sometimes like a mad man; sometimes like an unclean spirit,—feeling no distinction between cleanliness and its opposite. Sometimes he remains like an inanimate object—having been struck dumb by seeing God within and without; sometimes, like a child, he attaches his soul to nothing, and, as unconscious, goes about with his clothes bundled in his arms. But when he works for the good of others, he who has seen God, is as manly as a lion.

600. Lakshmana once said to his Divine brother, "Is it not strange, O Rama, that a *Jnanin* like Vasishtha Deva should have wept for the loss of his sons, and would not be comforted?"

Thereupon said Rama, "Good, my brother! But bear in mind that whoever possesses *Jnana* must at the same time have *Ajnana* also; whoever has the knowledge of unity, must also have the knowledge of diversity; whoever has the consciousness of light must have the consciousness of darkness also; because all these being correlatives belong to the domain of nescience. Unless one goes beyond both of them, one cannot be free from sorrow and ignorance."

601. God (Brahman) is above and beyond both knowledge and ignorance, good and evil, *dharma* and *adharma*,—indeed beyond all the dual throng.*

602. Then, what remains after the two thorns, as you

call them, of knowledge and ignorance are both thrown away?

What remains is the Absolute—mentioned in the Vedas as *Nitya-suddha-buddha rupam*, the Unchangeable, the absolutely Pure, and the Absolute Knowledge.*

603. Q. When shall I be free?—
A. When "I" shall cease to be.

604. "I" and "mine" is ignorance, Ajnana.
"Thou" and "Thine" is knowledge, Jnana.

605. Know thyself, and thou shalt then know the non self and the Lord of all. What is my ego? Is it my hand, or my foot? My flesh, or blood, or muscle, or tendon? Ponder deep and thou shalt know that there is really no such thing as "I." As by continuously peeling off the skin of an onion, so on analysing the ego it will be found that there is not any real entity corresponding to the ego. The ultimate result of all such analysis is God. When egoism drops away, divinity manifests itself.

606 In the game of hide-and-seek, if the player once succeed in touching 'granny,' he is no longer liable to be made a 'thief.' He is free to go wherever he wishes, without being harassed. Similarly, in this world's play-ground, there is no fear for him who has once touched the feet of the Almighty. He lives as a *Jivanmukta*, a free soul.

607. A holy man, while passing through a crowded street trod accidentally on the toe of a wicked man, who,

furious with rage, beat the *Sádhu* mercilessly, till he fell to the ground in a state of unconsciousness. His disciples adopted every means to bring the sage back to consciousness, and when they saw that he was coming round a little, one of them asked,—"Master do you recognise who is now serving you?" The *Sádhu* replied,—"The same who beat me." A true *Sádhu* finds no distinction between friend and foe, for he sees the same Spirit present in all.

608. "Do you believe in God, Sir?"

"Yes," the Bhagaván replied.

"Can you prove it, Sir?"—"Yes."

"How?"—"Because I see Him just as I see you here, only very much more intensely."

609. Realisation of God first, and then His creation. Valmiki was given the *mantram* 'Ráma' to meditate upon, but was instructed to begin by taking it in its inverted form, as 'Marâ,' 'marâ.' That is, Ma (म) Ishvara, and rá (रा), Jagat (universe). First God and then the universe. †

610. Know the One and you will know all. Ciphers placed after the number one, become hundreds of thousands. But nothing remains if you wipe out the number one. The many has value only because of the One First, the one and then the many. First God, and then world and creatures (*Jagat* and *Jiva*). †

611. His life is vain who, having received a human birth, does not attain realisation of God.

612. Mandodari told her consort Râvana, "If you are so intent upon having Sita as your queen, why don't you, by your magic powers, impose upon her by assuming the form of her husband Râma?"

"Fie on thee!" exclaimed Râvana. "Can I stoop to pleasures of the senses while in the holy form of Ráma, the very thought of which fills my heart with such unspeakable joy and blessedness, that even the highest heaven appears to me as nothing!" †

613. We possess home, family, and children, for a short time, but all these are non-eternal. The palm tree itself is real. But when one or two of its fruits fall to the ground, why should we regret it? *

614. There was a wise peasant who had only one son, of whom he was naturally very fond. One day the son died suddenly of cholera, and every inmate of the household was plunged into an ocean of grief. But the father remained perfectly unmoved and tried to console his family by words of wisdom. This his wife mistook for want of sympathy, and she rebuked him saying, "How cruel you must be not to shed a tear for our child!" The peasant replied calmly, "Why, I dreamt, last night, that I had become a king, and was the father of eight children, which made me very happy. Now I cannot tell whether I should mourn the loss of those eight sons or weep for our beloved Hari!" This peasant was a *Jnani*. He knew that the experiences of the waking state were as unreal as things seen in a dream, and that the only reality was the *Atman*. †

615. He indeed is blessed, in whom all the qualities

of head and heart are fully developed and evenly balanced. He bears himself well, in whatever position he may be placed. He is full of guileless faith and love for God, and yet his dealings with others leave nothing to be desired. When he engages in worldly affairs, he is a thorough man of business; in the assemblage of the learned, he establishes his claims as a man of learning, and in debates, he shows great powers of reasoning. To his parents, he is obedient and affectionate; to his brethren and friends he is loving and sweet; to his neighbours he is kind and sympathetic, always ready to do them good; and to his wife he is the lord of love. Such a man is indeed perfect.

616. God is beyond mind and intellect, so long as they are bound within relativity, but He manifests Himself to them when they are purified It is lust and wealth which make the mind impure. As long as Avidyâ reigns in the heart, the mind and the intellect can never be pure. They are known to be different from each other, but in their purified state, they become one, and are resolved into *Chaitanya* (the awakened pure consciousness). Then God, the *Chaitanya*, becomes manifest to the *Chaitanya.**

617. The realisation of God is of two kinds: one is a manifestation of the Jivâtman and Paramâtman; and the other is the sight of the Divine in His personal manifestation. The former is called Jnánam, and the latter, Bhakti.

618. As a lamp brought into a room which has been in darkness for a thousand years, illumines it immediately,

even so, the light of Jnana illumines the Jiva, and dispels his age-long ignorance.

619. Betake yourself to *Chit* (Pure Intelligence), to realise the *Sat* (Eternal Existence).

620. Try to know the *Nitya* (the Unchangeable), through the *Lilá* (the play of manifestation).

621. Many are under the impression that knowledge cannot be gained without reading books. But it is better to hear than to read, better to see than to hear. What a difference there is between reading about Kâshi, hearing about Kâshi, and seeing and living in Kâshi! †

622. As the hour and the minute-hand come together at the hour of twelve, so does my mind long to remain ever absorbed in Brahman. But since my life is for the good of others, I bring it down, with great effort, to the consciousness of the outer world.

623. It is all very easy to say that the world is illusion, but do you know what that really means? It is like the burning of camphor which leaves no residue behind. It is not even like the burning of wood, which leaves ashes behind. When discrimination ends, formless Samadhi is attained. Then there is absolutely no recognition of I, thou, and the universe.

624. A certain place was surrounded by a high wall. The people outside did not know what was within, and four persons determined to find out for themselves by

scaling the wall. But as soon as the first man reached the top and had a glimpse of the inside, he became struck with wonder, and calling out in delight he jumped in. The second and third did likewise. Then who was there to give information?

625. Brahman, the Absolute, is like the walled place. He who beholds, forgets his own existence, rushes headlong into It with ecstatic joy and attains Moksha or absolute freedom. Such are the holy men and liberated saints of the world, like Jadabharata and Dattatreya, who after their realisation of Brahman could not come back to preach it to others.

626. The fourth and last man arrived at the top of the wall. Though strongly tempted to do as the others had done and jump down, he resisted the temptation, and, instead, returning by the ladder he communicated the glad tidings to all who were outside. Such are the Saviours of humanity who see God, and are anxious to share their bliss of the Divine vision with others. They refuse the final liberation (Moksha), and willingly undergo the trouble of rebirth in this world, in order to teach and lead struggling humanity to its ultimate goal.

627. The state of union between the supreme and the Self-realising soul is like the hands of the clock, coming together at the hour of twelve.

628. Even as a single Brâhmana, when he conducts worship, is called the priest, when he cooks, the cook, and when he bakes, the baker, so He is but One, whom the

Jnanis call Brahman, the Yogis, Paramátman, and the Bhaktas, God.*

629. One of the indications of God-vision is, that within the body a huge current of air rushes up with great force to the head. If this is followed by Samadhi, then God-vision comes.

630. In true *Jnana* not the least trace of *Aham* (egoism) is left. Without *Samadhi*, Jnana never comes. It is like the midday sun. One looks around and finds no shadow of himself. So, when one attains *Jnana* or *Samadhi*, one retains no shadow of egoism. But even if there be some ego left, know for certain that it is now composed of *Vidyá* (purely divine elements) and not of ignorance or *Avidyá*.

631. The *Jnani* sees Him in one way, the *Bhakta* in another. The God of the *Jnani* is full of effulgence, He of the Bhakta, full of sweetness.

632. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Brahman is beyond mind and speech, beyond concentration and meditation (*Dhárana* and *Dhyána*), beyond the knower, the known and knowledge, beyond even the conception of the real and the unreal. In short, It is beyond all relativity."

633. The Master would go into the highest state of Samadhi, the unconditioned, by uttering the word *Tat* (That) only, out of the formula "*Om Tat Sat*." *Sat* (existence) might bring a remote suggestion of its

opposite, 'Asat,' and even the most sacred symbol 'Om' seemed to fall short of the mark. But when he uttered '*Tat*' (That), all ideas of relativity would be completely effaced from his consciousness; all discrimination between existence and non-existence would cease; he would become *Tanmaya* and be merged in the realisation of the One that transcends all limitations.

634. Once Sri Ramakrishna asked Narendra what was his ideal in life. "To remain absorbed in *Samadhi*," replied Narendra. "Can you be so small-minded as that?" the Master said. "Go beyond *Samadhi*. *Samadhi* is a trifling thing for you!"

To another he said, "*Bháva* (divine ecstasy) and *Bhakti*—these are not final."

635. On another occasion Sri Ramakrishna asked the same question of Narendra, and received the same reply as before. To which the Master remarked: "Why! I thought *you* were made of better stuff! How can you be satisfied with such a one-sided ideal? My strength is all-sidedness. I would like to enjoy fish, for instance, in a variety of ways, fried and boiled, made into soup, pickled. I enjoy the Lord, not only in His unconditioned state of Oneness, as unqualified Brahman, in *Samadhi*, but also in His various blessed manifestations through sweet human relationships. So do thou likewise. Be a *Jnani* and a *Bhakta* both in one."

636. Sri Ramakrishna once said to Keshab Sen: "If you advance further, and preach higher and higher things, your 'sect' will fall to pieces. In the state of *Jnana*, forming sects becomes meaningless,—false as a dream."

637. When the nest of a bird is destroyed, it betakes itself to the sky. Similarly, when all consciousness of the body and the outer world is effaced from the mind, the soul of a man (*Jivatman*) soars into the sky of the Supreme (*Paramatman*) and merges itself in *Samadhi.* †

638. One who has *Jnana* fears no adverse criticism from others. His mind is firm-fixed and unshakable—like the blacksmith's anvil, which remains steady and uninjured, though the heavy blows of the hammer fall constantly upon it.

639. Birth and death are like bubbles on the water The water is real, the bubbles are false. They take their rise in the water and are again merged in it. Even so, God is like a great ocean, and the souls are like bubbles. Through Him do they come into being, in Him they live, and unto Him they return. God Himself is alone real, His manifestations as the soul and the world—*Jiva* and *Jagat*—are unreal. They are evanescent, non-eternal

640. Jnana never comes without renunciation of lust and possession. With renunciation is destroyed all ignorance, all Avidyâ. Many things can be burnt by means of a lens held up directly in the rays of the sun. But you cannot use it so, in the shadow of a room. Even so with the mind. You must take it out of the dark cell of this world and expose it to the full blaze of Self-effulgent Divinity. Then alone will come true renunciation, and all ignorance will be destroyed.

641. But after the realisation of God, some prefer to

remain in the world. They can see both what is within it, and what is without. The blazing light of their knowledge falls upon everything in the world, and they can easily discriminate good from evil, the eternal from the non-eternal.

642. The ignorant who dwell in the world without knowing God, live, as it were, in houses made of mud. By the dim light they can half see what is about them in the room. But those who live in the world after realising God, live, as it were, in rooms made of glass. They can see distinctly both within and without. The sun of knowledge illumines the whole world for them, and they discern clearly what is good and what is bad, what is eternal and what is transient.

643. Fire itself has no definite form, but in the glowing embers it assumes different shapes, and the formless fire is then endowed with forms. Similarly, the formless God sometimes invests Himself in definite forms.

644. The grace of God does not consist in giving us our daily bread. Every father is bound to provide his children with food and raiment. He is truly gracious when He gives us strength to overcome our daily temptations.

645. A policeman can see with a dark lantern (bull's eye) everyone on whom its rays are thrown, but no one can see him so long as the light is not turned upon himself. In the same way God sees everyone, but none sees Him until He reveals Himself to him.

646. The Vedas, the Puranas, and the other sacred scriptures of the world are all polluted by the touch of men's lips. But Brahman, the Absolute, has never been defiled, for no one has ever expressed It in human speech.*

647. A traveller sat down, fatigued and hungry after a long journey, under the shade of a wishing-tree, *Kalpa-Vriksha*. He then wished for sumptuous food and cooling drink. Immediately these things rose before him, and his cravings were satisfied. After this, he thought how happy he would be if he had the company of a charming damsel, and instantly one appeared at his side. While he was enjoying himself in her pleasing society the thought came to him, "Suppose a tiger should come and devour me!" And alas! instantaneously he was in the jaws of a tiger! Even so, God is like the *Kalpa-Vriksha*. Whoever in His presence fancies that he is weak and destitute, remains so, but he who thinks and believes that the Lord fulfils all his wants, receives all he needs.

648. Some fish have many bones, and others few; the eater picks out the bones and eats the fish. So some men have many sins, and others few; but the grace of God purifies them all in time.

649. The breeze of His Grace is blowing day and night above thy head. Unfurl the sails of thy boat if thou desirest to cross the ocean of life.

650. In taking a human body one cannot avoid suffering, for the body is made up of the five elements of matter. Hence our sufferings are of the flesh.*

651. Knowest thou what I see? I see Him as all. Men and other creatures appear to me only as hollow forms, moving head and hands and feet, but within is the Lord Himself.*

652. Once I had a vision:—I felt that One Substance had taken the form of the cosmos, with all its creatures. It then resembled a house of wax, with men, animals, gardens, roads, and the rest, all made of wax, and nothing but wax.*

653. I realise that these three are all one—the altar, sacrifice, and the priest who slayeth.*

654. Sri Ramakrishna: Had it been given to this body to remain in the world a few days longer, the souls of many would have been awakened. But it hath been otherwise ordained and such is not the will of the Lord.

Rakhal (affectionately): Do pray to the Lord, Sir, that thou mayst abide with us a little longer!

Sri Ramakrishna: Let the will of the Lord be done!

Narendra: But surely thy will hath become one with the will of the Lord!

Sri Ramakrishna: Why should I trouble about it? His will be done! *

655. I see that I have become one with my Divine Mother once and for all. Said Radha to Krishna: "Abide thou, O Beloved, within my heart and appear to me no longer in thy human form." But she soon yearned to see the form of Krishna again. Her heart panted and strug-

gled for a sight of her Beloved. But the Lord's will must be done, and for a long time Krishna did not appear in bodily form to her.*

656. Here (i. e. within myself) there are two persons. One is the Divine Mother, the other is Her worshipper. It is the second person who once broke his arm. It is also the second person who is now taken ill. Do you understand this? *

657. The Lord comes with His disciples as a Divine Incarnation He takes a human body and His disciples go back with Him to the Divine Mother.

A company of *Bauls* come into a house all on a sudden; they chant the name of the Lord, and dance for joy! Having done that, they leave at once. They are as abrupt in going as they are in coming. And those who heard them knew them not *

658. A pariah was carrying the flesh of slaughtered animals in baskets suspended on a yoke fitted to his shoulder, when he met Sankaracharya, who was returning from bath, in the Ganges. It chanced that he touched the person of the holy man. Sankara was offended and cried out, "Thou hast touched me, Sirrah!" The pariah replied, "Lord, neither have I touched thee, nor hast thou touched me! Do thou reason with me and say whether thy true Self is body, or mind, or intellect, and tell me what thou truly art. Well dost thou know that the Atman is attached neither to *Sattva* which leadeth to God, ncr to *Rajas* which leadeth to action, nor to *Tamas*, which turneth us away from light." *

659. Brahman is unattached to good or evil. Brahman is like the flame of a lamp. You may read the Bhâgavata (the Holy Scripture) by the light of the lamp, or it is equally open to you to forge a document with criminal intent by the same light.

Again Brahman is like the serpent. What does it signify if the serpent has poison in its fangs? The serpent is none the worse for it; the poison does not cause its death. It is only poison to other creatures whom it may happen to bite.

Much in the same way, misery, sin, and whatever evil we find in this world, is misery, sin and evil only relatively to us. Brahman is above and beyond all these things. Good and evil in creation is not so to Brahman. He is not to be judged by any human standard of good and evil.*

660. The Absolute is like the air, which carrieth the odours, be they good or bad, but remaineth unattached to the odours.

The Absolute is beyond all attributes—beyond whatever is connected with Maya.*

661. There is the Vidya Maya, which tends Godward, and there is the Avidya Maya, which turns one away from God. Lust and gold lure one away from God. Knowledge, renunciation, and devotion lead to God. Sankara never parted with the latter.*

662. If one takes the help of the Vidya Maya which leads to God, one may realise the Absolute (Brahmajnana).*

663. After reaching the roof some persons like to go down and come up again and again by the staircase. They retain the love of the Personal God even after the realisation of the Absolute. They do so to set an example to mankind, and also for enjoying the sweetness of Divine Love and the company of those that love the Lord.*

664. One must renounce—give up the world for the sake of the Lord.*

665. When thou seest everything as the manifestation of the Lord, canst thou see anything else but the Lord? Surely, thou canst not see the world (Samsara), or thy family, separate from Him.

But one needs to give up from the mind. Those that come here (to me),—none of them are of the world. They are in the world but not of it. Their desire to enjoy has been fulfilled and they can now give their whole mind to God.*

666. The Ashtâvakra Samhita deals with the knowledge of the Self. The knowers of the Self declare, "I am He," i. e., "I am that Highest Self." It is proper for a man of renunciation to say so, but not for a worldly-minded man.*

667. But it is good for every one to cherish the sentiment that he is free. "I have no bondage." "I am free." If a man constantly cherishes such an idea, he is sure to be free. On the other hand, he who thinks that he is in bondage, really brings bondage to himself.

The mean-minded man who always says, "I am a sinner," "I am a sinner," is sure to fall into the mire of sin. A man should rather say, "I am always repeating the holy name of God, how can there be any sin or bondage in me?"

668. Some say, "I am like a worm grovelling in the dust," and thus always thinking themselves low, in time they become weak in spirit. Let not despondency ever enter into thy heart; despair is the great enemy of progress in one's path. As a man thinketh so he becometh.†

669. The Self has no attachment to anything. Pleasure, pain, sinfulness, righteousness, etc., can never affect the Self in any way, but they can affect those who identify themselves with the body; as smoke can only blacken the wall, but not the space enclosed within it.†

670. Pleasure and pain are the necessary accompaniments of the body. Body is the resultant of one's past actions. So a man has to bear with it as long as the effects of his past actions are not exhausted. A blind man taking a bath in the holy water of the Ganges gets all his sins washed away, but his blindness on that account does not leave him. But however the body may be under the influence of pleasure and pain, the glory of knowledge and devotion never leaves a true devotee.*

671. Meditate upon the Knowledge and Bliss Eternal, and you also will have bliss. The Bliss indeed is eternal, only it is covered and obscured by ignorance. The less your attachment is towards the senses, the more will be your love towards God.

As Srimati (Radha) was nearing Sri Krishna, she was getting the charming fragrance of His sweet person The more one approaches God, the more one's love towards Him increases; the more the river nears the sea, the more it is subject to ebb and flow.*

672. The Ganges of Knowledge flowing in the heart of a wise man, runs only in one direction. To him the whole universe is a dream. He always lives in his own Self. But the Ganges of Love in a devotee's heart does not always run in the same direction; it has its ebb and flow. A devotee laughs, weeps, dances, sings. He wants to enjoy his Beloved, to merge himself in his Beloved. He swims in Him, as it were, sometimes dives and sometimes rises up, just as a lump of ice in water

673. A certain person deeply involved in debt, feigned madness to escape the consequences of his liabilities. Physicians failed to cure his disease, and the more he was treated for his ailment the greater became his madness. At last a wise physician found out the truth, and taking the feigning madman aside, rebuked him saying: "Sir, what are you doing? Beware, lest in feigning madness, you become really mad. Already you have developed some genuine signs of insanity" This home-thrust advice awoke the man from his folly, and he left off acting the part of a madman. By constantly acting a thing, one actually becomes that thing.

674. In the Puranas we are told that when Uma, the Mother of the Universe, incarnated Herself as the daughter of Himalaya, She blessed him with the vision of

the various manifestations of the Omnipotent Mother. But when Girirâj (the King of mountains) asked Her to show him the Brahman of the Vedas, Uma said, "O father, if you wish to see Brahman, you must live in the company of holy men—men who have entirely given up the world."*

675. I say, Podo! eat the mangoes. What is the use of your counting how many hundreds of mango trees there are in the garden, how many thousands of branches, how many tens of millions of leaves, and so on? You are here to eat the mangoes; eat them and go away. You have come into this world as a human being with a view to attain God by means of Sadhana (religious practices). Your duty is to try your best to acquire Bhakti. Why trouble yourself with unnecessary discussions. Will philosophical discussions change your life? Don't you see that four ounces of wine are quite capable of making you intoxicated? That being so, it is of no use, your calculating how many casks of wine there are in a wine-vendor's shop.*

676. Very few understand that the end of human life is to see God.*

677. The fact is, all this desire for Jnana or Mukti depends upon one's Karma in one's previous incarnations.

678. Sandhyâ (the usual religious exercises performed three times a day by the twice-born Hindus) loses herself in Gâyatri. Gâyatri loses herself in Pranava (i. e., Om, the sacred Vedic symbol for Brah-

man, God Absolute and Unconditioned). The Pranava in the end loses itself in Samadhi (pure God-consciousness). So all Karma (Sandhyâ or the like) ultimately loses itself in Samadhi.*

679. It is absurd to say, 'the Jagat (world) is unreal,' so long as we remain convinced that *we ourselves* (our Aham) are real. A person who has not realised Brahman cannot realise that the world is unreal.*

680. When the Aham is effaced, the Jiva (the individual consciousness) dies and there follows the realisation of Brahman in Samadhi. Then it is Brahman—not the Jiva—that realises Brahman.*

681. Is realisation of the Brahman an easy task? It is impossible without the annihilation of the mind. The Guru said to his disciple, "Let me have your mind, and I am giving you illumination."

682. The Vijnáni insists upon realisation as the only great fact in spiritual matters; and for it what is absolutely necessary is the Sadhana (preliminary discipline). Without it one cannot have Bhakti; without it, it is indeed a far cry to Brahma-Jnana.*

683. So long as there is the Ahamkára (the ego), there is both the Kárta (agent) and the Karma. There is alike the cause and the effect. There are as facts also, the millions of Jivas and Jagat, with the twenty-four Tattvas (principles of the Sankhya philosophy), Time past, present and future, previous births, future births

and all other differentiations. The goal of the Advaitist is the merging of the *Aham* in Brahman.

684. Have you ever seen a water-course running over with the water of the river with which it is connected? The water-course has sometimes no trace left, being entirely one with the river. But very often there may be noticed a slight movement in its water, which proves its separateness from the river-water. Very much the same is the case with the Paramahamsa. His soul becomes one with the Universal Soul. Still there is the ego of knowledge retained as a slight trace of individuality, to mark his separate existence from the Deity.*

685. Such a Paramahamsa may well be compared to a Kumbha (a jar or pitcher of water) when it is filled to the brim; and this fulness indicates the perfect state of Brahma-Jnana. The contents or parts of the contents of the Kumbha may be transferred to another vessel. The disciple is the other vessel.*

686. Those that are mere Jnanis are timid in their nature, as those who are novices at dice think only of how they can just manage to push their pieces to the central squares. But the Vijnani is afraid of nothing. He has realised both the Personal and Impersonal aspects of God. He has conversed with God, and has enjoyed Divine bliss. He is in bliss if by constant thinking on the Lord his mind is merged in the Absolute, and he feels just the same if the mind be not merged and concerns itself with the phenomenal world.†

687. A mere Jnani is monotonous. He is only

analysing, "Not this, not this; all this is dream-like." I can accept both the Absolute and phenomenal. †

688. Suppose there are ten jars full of water, which reflects the sun's image Now, how many suns are visible?

A devotee: Ten *images*. And of course there is another, the real sun.

Sri Ramakrishna: Suppose you break one jar. How many suns do you see?

The devotee: Nine reflected ones, and of course, the real sun itself.

Sri Ramakrishna: Now, suppose nine jars are pulled down. How many suns will appear now?

The devotee: One reflected sun, besides the one real sun.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Giris): What remains when the last jar is pulled down?

Giris: The real sun

Sri Ramakrishna. No We can't say in words what remains. Whatever is left, is left! Unless there be the reflected sun, how can you know that the real sun exists? In Samadhi egoism is destroyed. A man who has had Samadhi cannot, after he comes down to a lower plane of consciousness, express in words what he has experienced. †

689. The more you advance in spirituality, the less will you see the attributes of God.

690. A certain father had two sons. When they were old enough they were admitted to the first stage of life—the Brahmacharya, and placed under the care of a religious preceptor, to study the Vedas.

After a long while the boys returned home, having finished their studies. Their father asked them if they had read the Vedanta. On their replying in the affirmative, he asked: Well, tell me—What is Brahman?

The elder son quoting the Vedas and other scriptures replied: "O Father, It is not capable of being expressed by word of mouth, or of being known by the mind. Oh, It is so and so; I know it all." Then he again quoted Vedantic texts.

The father said, "So thou hast known Brahman! Thou mayst go about thy business." Then he asked the younger son the same question. But the boy sat quite mute. Not a word came out of his mouth, nor did he make any attempt to speak.

The father thereupon remarked, "Yes, my boy, thou art right. Nothing can be predicated of the Absolute and the Unconditioned! No sooner dost thou talk of It than thou statest the Infinite in terms of the Finite, the Absolute in terms of the Relative, the Unconditioned in terms of the Conditioned. Thy silence is more eloquent than the spouting forth of a hundred Slokas, and the quoting of a hundred authorities."*

691. Q. How has this delusion of the Undifferentiated Atman being differentiated into the individual soul come about?

A. The philosophical Advaitist, so long as he relies on the unaided powers of his reason, answers this question by saying, 'I do not know.' The answer which realisation alone gives is conclusive. So long as you say, 'I do know' or 'I do not know,' you look upon yourself as a person. And as such, you must take these

differentiations as facts—not delusion. When all personality is effaced, then one realises the Knowledge of the Absolute in Samadhi. Then alone are set at rest for ever all such questions of delusion or no delusion, fact or no fact.*

692. In my state of madness for the Lord, I used always to speak my own mind as to men and things. I regarded not the position of men, I was not in the least afraid of rich people, or men of position.

Also words not relating to God used to jar upon my ears. I used to sit by myself and cry whenever I heard people talking on worldly matters.*

693. Once there lived two Yogis, who practised austerities with a view to see God. One day, Narada, the divine sage, was passing by their hermitages. One of them said to Narada, "Art thou coming down from heaven?" Narada replied, "Yes, that is so." The Yogi said, "Do tell me what you saw the Lord of heaven doing." Narada said, "I saw the Lord of heaven causing camels and elephants to enter into the eye of a needle, and saw the animals passing in and out of it." One of the Yogis observed, "There is nothing here to marvel at. Nothing is impossible with God." The other man said, "O, nonsense, that is impossible! It only shows that you have never been to the Lord's place."

The first man was a Bhakta, and had the faith of a babe. Nothing is impossible with the Lord. The nature of the Lord no one can say. Everything can be predicated of Him. †

694. Until one sees God, one cannot help believing

that the soul is the same as the body. The idea clings to the ignorant—to him who has not seen God, but not to the knowing one; to him it is plain that the soul stands apart from the body.*

695. The shell of the unripe betel-nut adheres to the nut; it is so hard to part the one from the other. But with the ripe nut, the shell does not adhere to it; the nut is felt rolling inside, if shaken.*

696. The more is the love of God deepened in the human soul after Realisation, the easier it becomes to feel His presence in all things. Until a flood causes the river to overflow, thou must follow its roundabout course in order to reach the sea. After the flood there is deep water on the land itself, and thou mayst row from any point to the sea, straight as the crow flies.

After the harvest has been reaped, one need not any longer go round along the balk—one may walk straight to any point over the fields.*

697 It is hard for a man who comes down from Samadhi and has seen God, to give his mind to the little things of this world; indeed, he has nothing in this unreal phenomenal world for his mind to rest upon. Hence he seeks the company of pure souls, for they have not touched the world and the things that the world can give—money, honours, titles, power, sense-pleasures.*

698. Few are those who are qualified for Jnanam. The less is your attachment for the world, that is, lust and gold, the more you will attain to Jnanam.

699. Openness of mind, as opposed to dissimulation, is the fruit of the practice of a good many religious austerities in one's previous incarnations.

Dost thou not see that whenever God hath taken a human form, this great virtue of guilelessness hath never failed to come to view? *

700. God-vision cannot be made clearly intelligible to others. The state of things that comes about in it may, however, be described to a certain extent only.

You have no doubt been to the theatre. Before the performance commences, people are very busy talking to one another on a variety of subjects—politics, household affairs, official business, etc. But the drop-scene goes up, and behold, mountains, cottages, rivers, actors, &c., are suddenly presented to view! Instantaneously, all noise, all conversation is at an end, and each individual spectator is all attention to the novel scene that is being enacted before him. Pretty much the same is the state of him who is blessed with God-vision.*

701. A holy man had a manuscript book with him. Somebody asked him what it was about. The saint opened the book before the man, who was surprised to find that on every page was written only the Name of God—the words "Om Rama!"*

702. In the course of meditation to gain Ananda, one needs to be merged in the Lord. If one floats on the surface, one cannot hope to reach the precious gems lying at the bottom of the sea.*

703. "Is Kali, the Mother, of a dark-blue complexion ?"

"Oh, no! She is so far away from human ken that She only *seems* to be so. Does not the sky look blue from a distance? But the sky is really colourless when seen near us. Pretty much the same is the case with sea-water. It is of a dark-blue colour when looked at from a distance. Come near it, take a little up in the hands and thou shalt find it colourless. Thus go near and realise Kâli, the Divine Mother, and She will appear to be the *same as God*, the Absolute, about whom no attribute can be predicated.*

704. Thou seest many stars at night in the sky, but findest them not when the sun rises. Canst thou say that there are no stars, then, in the heaven of day? So, O man, because thou beholdest not the Almighty in the days of thy ignorance, say not that there is no God.*

705. Even when you fail, let not your Vichara, your analysis, cease for one moment within your own mind. In that way, even your mistakes will lead you to knowledge.

706. Everything, even the name of God is Maya. But some of this Maya helps us towards freedom; the rest only leads us deeper into bondage.*

707. All men hedge in the fields of earth, but who can hedge in the sky?

708. Those who have got the human body for the first time need some worldly enjoyment. One does not attain to knowledge unless he has gone through some amount of preparatory work.

709. The Master (to Pratap Ch. Mazoomdar): You are an educated and intelligent man, you are a deep thinker. Keshab and yourself were like the brothers Gour and Nitai. You have had enough of this world—enough of lectures, controversies, schisms and the rest. Do you still care for them? Now, it is high time for you to collect your scattered mind and turn towards God. Plunge into the Ocean of Divinity.

Mazoomdar: Yes, Revered Sir, that I ought to do; there is no doubt about it. But all this I do simply to preserve Keshab's name and reputation.

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling): Let me tell you a story. A man built a cottage on a mountain-top. It cost him hard labour and much money. After a few days there arose a cyclone and the cottage began to rock to and fro. He was very anxious to save it, so he prayed to the Wind-god, saying: "Lord, I beseech Thee, do not destroy this cottage"; but the Wind-god did not listen. He prayed again, but the cottage kept on rocking. Then he thought out a plan to save it. He remembered that according to the mythology, Hanuman was the son of the Wind-god. Instantly he cried out: "Lord, I beg of Thee, spare this cottage, for it belongs to Hanuman, Thy son.' But the Wind-god did not listen. Then he said, "Lord, I pray Thee, spare this cottage, for it belongs to Hanuman's Lord, Rama." Still the Wind-god did not listen. Then, as the cottage began to topple over, the man to save his life, ran out of it and began to swear, saying, "Let this miserable cottage go to destruction! What is that to me?"

You may now be anxious to preserve Keshab's name; but console yourself with the thought that it was

after all owing to God's will that the religious movement connected with his name was set on foot, and that if the movement has had its day, it is also owing to that same Divine Will. Therefore dive deep into the Sea of Immortality. †

710. It is true enough that the conditioned mind cannot realise God. But He can be realised by the Pure Mind, which is the same thing as the Pure Reason, which is, again, the same thing as the Pure Unconditioned Soul. He cannot indeed be sensed by the finite reason or the finite, relative, conditioned mind, which has a sensuous nature, and is thus marked by an attachment to lust and worldliness. The mind may become rid of its sensuous nature, be purified by culture, and be once more free from all worldly tendencies, desires and attachments, and thus be one with the Unconditioned Soul.

Was it not thus that the sages of old saw God? God the Unconditioned Spirit, they saw by means of the Purified Mind, which they found to be the same as the Atman or Unconditioned Soul within. ‡ *

711. A fisherman came to a garden at night and threw his net in the pond to catch fish. Hearing the noise the owner sent his men to capture him. The men came with torches in their hands to discover the thief. In the meantime the fisherman had dropped his net, covered his face with ashes, and sat under a tree, pretending to be a holy man absorbed in meditation. The men could not find the thief; they simply noticed that a

‡ Compare Kant's exposition of the Transcendental Reason as the faculty of the Unconditioned.

holy man was meditating under a tree. So they returned to the owner and told him what they had seen. Everybody then brought flowers, fruits and sweets to the holy man and paid him great honour and respect. Next morning crowds of people came to see the Sadhu and offered to him money and various other things. The fisherman thought: "How strange it is! I am not a holy man, still people have so much respect for me, and I have received so many gifts. If I become a genuine Sadhu, how much more I shall get! Undoubtedly I shall see God." If merely feigning to be a holy man could so far a vaken him, what can be said of him who has practised il virtues in order to become a truly holy man! He w realise what is Real and what is unreal, that God is ath and the world is unreal.*

712. So g as God seems to be outside and far away, so lo there is ignorance. But when God is realised with that is true knowledge.

A man wo up at midnight and desired to smoke. He wanted a it, so he went to a neighbour's house and knocked the door. Someone opened the door and asked what he wanted. The man said: "I wish to sm Can you give me a light?" The neighbour re l: "Bah! What is the matter with you? You have tak so much trouble to come and awakened us at this h , when in your hand you have a lighted lantern!" a man wants is already within him; but he still w rs here and there in search of it.*

713. Acc ng to Vedanta, the waking state is no more real th e dream-state.

There was a wood-cutter who was highly spiritual. One day he was dreaming a happy dream; but being suddenly awakened by someone, he exclaimed with annoyance: "Why did you awaken me? I was a king and the father of seven children. My children were all receiving education in the various sciences. I was seated on the throne and ruling over my country. Why did you destroy so happy and delightful a state?" The man replied: "Oh! It was only a dream. What does it matter?" The wood-cutter said: "Get away, you fool! You do not understand that my being a king was as real as my wood-cutting. If it be true that I am a wood-cutter, then it is equally true that I was a king."*

714. A man came to a king to show him jugglery. After he had moved away a little, the king saw an armed rider coming on a horse with gorgeous trappings. The king with all his courtiers began to discriminate what was the truth in all this. They found that neither the horse, nor the trappings, nor the weapons were true. At length they actually found that the rider was standing alone. In other words, Brahman is true, but the world is false—nothing in it survives analysis. †

715. The delusion of the phenomenal world is not easily removed, and lingers after enlightenment. One saw a tiger in a dream. The dream broke, but the heart kept beating still!†

716. Some thieves came to steal in a field. There had been set up a scarecrow made of straw, shaped like a human figure. The thieves did not dare to enter.

Finally, one of them went near and found it was a figure of straw! Returning, he asked his comrades to give up fear. But still they would not come in, and complained that they felt very nervous. He then laid the image down on the ground and began to say, "It is nothing! It is nothing! 'Neti!' 'Neti!'" †

717. Sambhu Mullick once said to me, "Sir, do thou bless me that I may die leaving all my wealth at the hallowed feet of the Divine Mother." I replied, "What dost thou speak? It is all wealth to thee! To the Divine Mother it is no better than the dust over which thou walkest." *

718. There was once a theft committed in Rani Rashmoni's garden at Dakshinesvar. The jewels that adorned the Images in the Temple of Vishnu were stolen. Mathoor (manager of the Temple and son-in-law of Rani Rashmoni) and myself went up there to see what was the matter. Mathoor cried out saying, "Thou, God, hast no worth!' They took away all Thy jewels, but Thou wast unable to do anything!" Upon this I said to him sharply, "How foolish it is of thee that thou talkest in this way! The jewels of which thou speakest are as good as lumps of clay to the Lord of the universe whom thou worshippest in this Image! Remember, it is from Him that the goddess of fortune deriveth all power!" *

719. Does the Lord care for all the wealth that one may offer to Him? Oh no! His grace lights on him alone who offers Love and Bhakti. What alone He values is such Prema and Bhakti, Viveka and Vairagya for His sake.*

720. It is not given to me to say of a person, "Let him be healed." Of my Divine Mother I never asked such power. My constant prayer is, "O Mother, do Thou grant that I may have Bhakti—pure, sincere love for Thee, unmixed with any worldly desires, such as health, pleasure, money, fame and so on." Never do I ask of Her the power of doing such miracles as the healing of diseases.*

721. Sri Ramakrishna (lying very ill at the Cossipur garden): The sufferings are of the flesh; that is as it should be—for the body is made of the five elements,—yes, it comes from matter.*

722. The Master (to Girish):—What dost thou think I always see in this state? Well, it is the spiritual Forms of the Lord. Many and various are those Forms! Amongst them do I behold that Form here (meaning his own form), in which, too, the Lord hath manifested Himself.*

723. Sri Ramakrishna [to Keshab]: You are suffering; but your illness has a deep meaning. In this body you have gone through various stages of spiritual development; the body is now suffering from the reaction. When the spiritual waves arise, the consciousness of the body vanishes; but it tells upon the body in the end. When a big steamer plies in the waters of the Ganges, the waves dash against the shore some time after; the larger the boat, the stronger the waves; sometimes they break down the banks. If the elephant enters a small hut, it shakes it and breaks it to pieces; so also

the experience of the spiritual ecstasy shakes and sometimes shatters the body of the devotee. What happens, do you know? If there be a fire in the house, it burns up many things. Similarly, the fire of Divine Wisdom burns all passions, anger and other enemies, and in the end destroys the sense of "I, me, and mine." The body is then wrenched and shattered. You may think that everything is finished, but so long as there is the least sign of I-ness, so long He will not make you free. If you enroll yourself as a patient in a hospital, you cannot come out before you are perfectly cured.†

724. Hridoy used to say, after seeing the condition of my body: "I have never seen so much spirituality and illumination with such a frail state of the body!" But although my body was weak, still I never stopped talking of God with others. At one time, I remember, I was thin like a skeleton, yet I would continue discussions on spiritual subjects for hours, without feeling that I had a body.†

725. Sri Ramakrishna (to Keshava): The gardener sometimes uncovers the roots of rose-bushes that the dew may fall upon them. Sometimes he trims off some of the roots so that the flowers will become larger. Perhaps the Lord is preparing you to do greater work.†

726. When the mind is attached to the consciousness of the external world it sees gross objects and abides in the Annamaya-Kosha,—the physical sheath of the soul, which depends on food. When the mind turns itself inward, it is like shutting the door of a house and enter-

ing its inner apartments; that is to say, it goes from the gross into the subtle, thence into the causal, till it reaches the supra-causal state. In that state the mind is merged in the Absolute and nothing can be told.†

727. Pandit Sasadhar seeing the Master's illness asked him: Why dost thou not concentrate thy mind upon the diseased part and thus cure thyself?

The Bhagavan replied: How can I fix my mind which I have given to God, upon this cage of flesh and bones?

Sasadhar said: Why dost thou not pray to thy Divine Mother for cure of thy illness?

The Bhagavan answered: When I think of my Mother, the physical body vanishes and I am entirely out of it, so it is impossible for me to pray for anything concerning the body.†

728. When Sri Ramakrishna's illness was so bad that he could hardly speak, or swallow any food, he exclaimed: I am now speaking and eating through so many mouths. I am the Soul of all the souls, I have infinite mouths. I am the Infinite Spirit covered by a human skin which had a wound somewhere in the throat. When the body is ill, that illness reacts upon the mind. When one is burned by hot water one says: "This water has burned me," but the truth is that heat burns and not the water. All pain is in the body, all disease is in the body, but the Spirit is above pain and beyond the reach of disease.†

729. The Mother has brought on this illness in me to teach man how to think of the Spirit and how to live

in God-consciousness, even when there is extreme pain in the body; when the body is suffering from the agony of pain and starvation, when there is no remedy within human power, even then the Mother shows me that Spirit is the master of the body. My Divine Mother has brought this illness upon this body to convince the sceptics that Atman is divine, that God-consciousness is true, that when one reaches perfection, freedom from all bondage is attained.†

730. During the reign of Akbar there lived, in a certain forest near Delhi, a Fakeer in a cottage. Many resorted unto this holy man. But he had nothing with which to treat them to hospitality He wanted money for this purpose and went for help to Akbar Shah, who was known for his kindness to holy men. Akbar Shah was then saying his prayers and the Fakeer took his seat in the prayer-room. In the course of his prayers Akbar was heard to say, 'O Lord, do Thou grant unto me more wealth, more power, more territories.' At once the Fakeer arose and was about to steal out of the room, when the Emperor beckoned to him to be seated again.

At the end of the prayer, Akbar asked the Fakeer, 'Thou didst come to see me · how is it that thou didst want to depart without saying anything to me?' The Fakeer said, 'The object of my visit to Your Majesty. - well. I need not trouble you with that.' Akbar having repeatedly pressed him to say what he wanted, the Fakeer at last said, 'Sir, many people come to me to be taught, but for want of money, I am unable to see to their comforts, so I thought it as well to come to Your

Majesty for help.' Akbar thereupon asked why he had been departing without having told him the object of his visit. The Fakeer replied. 'When I saw that you were yourself a beggar, begging of the Lord wealth and power and territory, I thought to myself, 'Why shall I go a-begging of a person who is himself a beggar? I had better beg of the Lord Himself,—if, indeed, it is not possible for me to do without begging altogether!' *

731. I said to Rakhal once. "My child, I should be better pleased to hear that thou hadst plunged thyself into the Ganges and hadst been drowned,—than if I ever heard that thou hadst been mean enough to be anybody's servant for the sake of money or other worldly goods." *

732. So long as there is the 'I' in me, so long is there before me the Personal God, revealing Himself through various Forms of Glory, or as Jiva and Jagat.

Even those that have realised the Absolute in Samadhi come down to the lower plane of sense-consciousness, and have just sufficient ego (*Aham*) left to hold communion with the Personal God. Is it not difficult to raise the voice incessantly to *ni*,‡ the highest note of the Gamut?

Hence, says the knowing one, is the necessity of a Personal God.

Let not the Advaitist say, "My position is the only correct, rational, and tenable one; those that believe in a Personal God are wrong." The Personal manifestations

‡ Corresponding to the 'Si' of the European musical scale.

of God are by no means less real, but infinitely more real than the body, or the mind, or the external world *

733. To think of Him as formless is quite right. But take care that thou dost not run away with the idea that that view alone is true and all else is false Meditating upon Him as a Being 'with forms' is equally right. But thou must hold on to thy particular view until thou *realisest* --*seest*--God, when everything shall be clear *

734. M --One may believe that God is 'with form' But surely He is not the earthen image that is worshipped?

The Master --Why call it an earthen image? The Image Divine is made of the Spirit. If there is anything wrong in image-worship, does He not know that all the worship is meant for Him? He will be pleased to accept the worship, knowing that it is meant for Him alone. Love God. That is the duty nearest thee *

735. When one sees God he realises that everything—image and all—is a manifestation of the Spirit. To him the Image is made not of clay, but of Spirit.*

736. The Master (to M.)—Thou wast talking of 'images made of clay. There comes a necessity for that too. These various forms of worship have been provided to suit different men in different stages of knowledge.

The mother so arranges the food for her children that each one gets what agrees with him. If she has five children and she gets a big fish to cook, she makes different dishes out of it, and gives each one of them what suits him exactly. One is given rich *polāo* with fish,

while another of weak digestion, only a little soup; while others exactly as agrees with their stomach.*

737. A certain monk went to the Temple of Jagannath at Puri. He had doubts as to whether God is with form or without form. When he saw the Holy Image he desired to examine this. He passed his staff from the left to the right in order to feel if it touched the Image. For a time he could not see anything or feel anything with the staff! So he decided that God was without form. When he was about to pass the staff from the right to the left it touched the Image! So the Sannyasin decided that God was both with form and without form *

738. Unless one sees God one is not able to realise all this. For the sake of those that love the Lord, He manifests Himself in various ways and in various forms.

A dyer had his own way of dying cloths. He would ask the customer, 'In what colour dost thou want thy cloth dyed?' If he said, 'red, the dyer dipped the cloth in the tub, and brought it out saying, 'Here is thy cloth dyed red.' Another wants his cloth dyed yellow. The dyer dips it in the same tub, brings it up, and behold, the cloth is dyed yellow. In the same way, when some other colour is wanted—blue or orange or violet or green—the same tub is used with the like result.

A customer who was watching all this came up to the dyer and said, 'My friend, I am not fond of any one colour. I desire to consult *thy* taste and should like to have my cloth dyed just as thou pleasest. I want the colour in which thou hast dyed thyself.'

The Lord manifests Himself as with form or without

form, with particular reference to the need of the devotee. The manifested Vision is relatively true, that is, relatively to different men who are, in the first place, limited, conditioned beings, and, in the second place, placed in the midst of different things round about them. The Divine Dyer alone knows in what colour He hath dyed Himself. Verily He is not bound by any limitation as to forms or manifestations, or the negation thereof.*

739. The same Being whom the Vedantists call Brahman, is called Atman by the Yogis, and Bhagavân by the Bhaktas. The same Brahmin when he conducts worship is called the priest, but when employed in the kitchen is called a cook.*

740. God the Absolute and God the Personal are one and the same. A belief in the one implies a belief in the other. Thus fire cannot be thought of apart from its burning power; nor can its burning power be thought of apart from the fire. Again, the sun's rays cannot be thought of apart from the sun, nor can the sun, apart from its rays. You cannot think of the whiteness of milk apart from the milk, nor the milk apart from its milky whiteness.

Thus God the Absolute cannot be thought of apart from the idea of God with Attributes, or Personal God, and *vice versa*.*

741. The Being is the same, only the names by which He is called by men of different religions are different. A tank may have four Ghats (landing-places with steps). The Hindus drink at one ghat, they call it *jal* or *bári*.

The Mahommedans drink at another, they call it *pâni*. The English who drink at a third call it water, and so on. Similarly, some call Him Allah, or Jesus, or Buddha, others Brahman, Kali, Rama, Hari &c.*

742. The Divine Mother sports with the world, Her toy, under various aspects and various names. Now She is the Goddess Unconditioned, Absolute, Formless; now the Everlasting, as distinguished from Her works. Under another aspect She is the Dreaded Being that presides over Death, the All-destroyer. Again, She stands before us ready to bless and to protect Her children. Or She appears as the charming Mother with the dark-blue complexion—Consort of the God of Eternity and of Infinity.*

743. Brahman, the Absolute and Unconditioned, is realised in Samadhi alone; and then it is all silence about delusion or non-delusion (of the Jiva and Jagat), knowing or not knowing. Whatever is, is there. For, verily, the salt-doll tells no tale when one with the infinite sea. This is Brahma-Jnana.*

744. To him alone who comes down from Samadhi to the plane of sense-consciousness is left a thin ego like a line (*Rekhâ*)—a length without breadth—just sufficient individuality to retain only the Spiritual Vision (*Divya Chakshu*). This enables him to see Jiva and Jagat (cosmos) as well as himself, as the One manifesting Himself in these different multifarious forms. This Vision of Glory comes to the *Vijnani* who has realised the Nirâkâra (formless), Nirguna (without qualities) Brahman in *Jada* or Nirvikalpa Samadhi, and also the Sâkâra

(with Forms) or Saguna (with qualities) Brahman in *Chetana* or Savikalpa Samadhi. You cannot conceive, think of, or perceive God otherwise than as a Person, so long as you are a person with an *Aham* or individuality of your own; and so long does the Unconditioned manifest Itself to man—both within and without him—as a conditioned Being, the Impersonal as a Personal God. These Personal Manifestations are by no means less real, but infinitely more real than the body or the mind, or the external world.*

745. The manifestation of the Personal God is often a Spiritual Form, which is seen only by a purified human soul (*Bhágavati Tanu*). In other words, these *Rupas* or Forms are realised by the organs of spiritual vision, belonging to that spiritual body derived from the Lord. So the perfect man alone can see those Divine Forms.*

746. No sooner do you talk of Advaita than you postulate the Dvaita. Talking of the 'Absolute' you take for granted the 'Relative.' For *your* 'Absolute' until realised in Samadhi is at best the correlative of the 'Relative,' if not indeed a mere empty word. You cannot possibly put It as It is, for you must have to throw over It a foreign element—that of your own personality.*

747. He who has manifested this *Lilá* (phenomenal world), has also the *Nitya* (unchangeable) state. And He who has the *Nitya* state has also the *Lilá*. †

748. It is through the *Lilá* that you must feel your way up to the *Nitya*. It is again from the *Nitya* that

you must feel your way back to the *Lila*—now no longer unreal, but manifestations to sense, of the *Nitya*.*

749. So long as you are a person (on the plane of Personality—the plane of sense and of even higher consciousness) your 'Absolute' must imply a 'Relative,' your *Nitya* must imply a *Lilá*, your Substance must imply qualities, your 'Impersonal' must imply a Personal Being, your 'One' must imply Many.*

750. So long as you are on the plane of Personality, you must admit both 'Butter' and 'Butter-milk,'—you must admit both Personal God and the Universe. To say by analogy, the original milk is, as it were, the Brahman realised in Samadhi, the 'Butter' is the Impersonal-Personal God, and the 'Butter-milk' the Universe made up of the twenty-four Tattvas or categories.*

751. As water when congealed becomes ice, so the visible form of the Almighty is the materialised manifestation of the All-pervading formless Brahman. It is, as it were, the *Sachchidánanda* solidified. As ice is essentially water, remains in water, and afterwards melts in it, so the Personal God is part and parcel of the Impersonal, remains there, and ultimately merges in It and disappears. †

752. The inactive Brahman and the active Sakti are, in fact, one and the same. He who is absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, is also the Eternal, All-knowing and All-blissful Mother of the universe. The self-luminous precious stone (Mani) and its luminosity

are one and the same, for you cannot imagine the stone without its luminosity, and *vice versa*.*

753. Wherever there is action, such as creation, preservation and destruction, there is Sakti or Intelligent Energy. Water is water whether it is calm or disturbed. That one Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss is the Eternal Intelligent Energy, who creates, preserves and destroys the universe. As when 'Captain'‡ does not do anything, or when he performs his worship, or when he goes to the Governor-General,—in all cases, he is the same 'Captain,' only these are his different *Upadhis* or states.*

754. When the Supreme Being is thought of as *Nishkriya* (Inactive)—neither creating, sustaining nor destroying, I call Him by the name of Brahman or Purusha (the Male Principle).

When I think of Him as active—creating, sustaining, destroying &c., I call Him by the name of Sakti, or Maya, or Prakriti (the Female Principle).*

755. Once upon a time some ants came to a mountain entirely made up of sugar; but the ants, of course, had no idea that it was so big. They ate a few particles of the sugar and were quite satisfied. Then they each took a particle or two, to carry home. As they went on their way, they thought that next time they would be able to remove the whole thing, meaning the whole mountain, to their place of habitation!

‡ Captain (afterwards Colonel) Viswanath Upadhyaya of the Nepal State—a great admirer of the Master.

Such, alas, is the condition of man! It is given to very few, indeed, to realise the Supreme Being. But unfortunately, many run away with the idea, that they have fully known and realised that Being.

It is as absurd to say that Brahman has been known and comprehended by anybody, as it is to say that a mountain of sugar, as big as the Himalayas, has been carried home by a body of ants to be eaten up.*

756. Really the distinction between Brahman and Sakti is a distinction without a difference.

Brahman and Sakti are one (Abheda), just as fire and its burning power are one.

Brahman and Sakti are one, just as milk and the whiteness of milk are one.

Brahman and Sakti are one, just as a gem and its brightness are one.

You cannot conceive of one without the other or make a difference between them.*

757. Manifestation of this Sakti varies in varying centres of activity—for variety is the law—not sameness. God is immanent in all creatures; He is even in the ant. The difference is in manifestation only.

My Divine Mother is the one Being manifest as many. Of infinite power Herself, She has differentiated into jivas (living creatures) and Jagat (the universe) of manifold powers,—physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. And my Divine Mother is no other than the Brahman of the Vedanta. She is the Personal side of the Impersonal Brahman.*

758. Be it known that my Divine Mother is both One and Many, and also beyond One and Many.*

759. There can be no Narayana without Lakshmi.

760. He who has been really able to see one Form or aspect of God, can easily see all the other Forms or aspects of Him.

That which is Supreme Brahman, That which is the Undivided Existence-Knowledge-Bliss—That is what I call my Mother.†

761. Fix your mind on one thing only, either the Personal God or the Impersonal. If you be steady, then only you can realise God, otherwise not. If he be steady, the upholder of the Personal God will realise God as well as he of the Impersonal. Take it lengthwise or breadthwise, a sweet bread will taste sweet.

But you must be steady, you must call Him with earnestness.

You must be steady on some one thing. Dive deep. Unless you plunge, you won't have any jewels at the sea-bed. You can't get them if you simply float on the surface of the water.‡

762. Vijay: [illegible] can one get a vision of this Fountainhead of [illegible], and that Knowledge of Brahman?

Sri Ramakrishna: Pray to Her with the eagerness of heart, and [illegible] your mind will be purified, and you will [illegible] the reflection of the Sun on the pure water. On the mirror of the 'devotee's ego,' you will [illegible] Sakti, that is, the Brahman with

attributes. But the mirror must be thoroughly cleansed. If there be dirt, you won't get the true reflection!

So long as one has to see the sun in the water of 'ego,' and there is no other way left to see the real sun except through the reflected sun, the reflection itself must remain the whole truth. So long as the 'I' is true, the reflected sun is true also,—true in every respect. That reflected sun is the Fountainhead of Sakti.

If you want Knowledge of the Absolute, make use of this reflected sun and go towards the true Sun. Appeal to that Brahman with attributes, that listens to prayers, and it is He who will give you the knowledge of the Absolute. For, He who is Brahman with attributes, is Brahman beyond the attributes, the same who is Sakti is Brahman. All distinction goes after perfection of Knowledge.†

Seeing God in Everything.

763. I have now come to a stage of Realisation in which I see that God is walking in every human form and manifesting Himself alike through the sage and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious. Therefore when I meet different people I say to myself: "God in the form of the saint, God in the form of the sinner, God in the form of the righteous, God in the form of the unrighteous." †

764. There was a Hindu monastery in a certain village. The monks of the monastery went out every day with begging bowls to gather food. One day, a monk, passing by, saw a zemindar (landlord) severely beating a poor man. The holy man being very kind-hearted, entreated the zemindar to stop beating the man. The zemindar, blind with rage, immediately turned on the monk and poured upon him the venom of his anger. He beat him right and left until he was knocked unconscious on the ground. Another man, seeing his condition, went to the monastery and told what had happened. His brother-monks ran to the spot where the holy man was lying. They lifted him and brought him to the monastery and laid him in a room; but the holy man still remained unconscious for a long time. Sorrowful and anxious, his brothers fanned him, bathed his face,

put milk into his mouth and tried to nurse him back to life. * Gradually they brought him back to consciousness. When the holy man opened his eyes and looked at his fellow-Sannyasins, one of them, desiring to know whether he could recognise his friends, asked him in a loud voice: "Maharaj, dost thou recognise him who is feeding thee with milk?" The holy man answered in a feeble voice: "Brother, he who beat me is now feeding me."

One cannot realise this oneness of the Spirit unless one has reached God-consciousness, and gone beyond good and evil, above virtue and vice. †

The Three Gunas.

765. M: Is compassion also a bondage?

Sri Ramakrishna: That is a question of the last stage. Compassion springs from Sattva. Sattva leads to preservation, Rajas to creation, and Tamas to destruction. But Brahman is beyond the three *gunas*, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas—beyond Prakriti.

The *gunas* cannot reach the domain of the Absolute, as a thief cannot go to the right quarters for fear of detection. Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, all these three *gunas* are thieves. Let me tell you a story.

A man was going through the woods. On his way he was caught by a band of three robbers. They took away everything he had. Then the first robber asked: "What is the use of keeping this man alive?" And drawing his sword he was about to kill him, when the second robber stopped him, saying: "What good will be done by killing him? Tie his hands and feet and throw him to one side." So they bound his hands and feet and went away leaving him by the roadside. After they had been gone for a while, the third robber returned and said to him: "Ah! are you hurt? Come, let me untie the cords and release you." Then, when he had removed the cords, he said: "Now come with me. I will show you

the road." After walking for a long distance, they found the road, and then the robber said: "Look, there is your home. Follow the road and you will soon reach it." The man, thanking him, replied: "Sir, you have done me a great service. I am greatly obliged to you. Will you not come with me to my house?" The robber answered: "No, I cannot go there; the guard would find me out."

This world is the wilderness. The three robbers are the three Gunas of nature,—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Jiva, or the individual soul, is the traveller; Self-knowledge is his treasure. The Tamas quality tries to destroy the Jiva, the Rajas quality binds him with the fetters of the world, but the Sattva quality protects him from the actions of Rajas and Tamas. By taking refuge in the Sattva quality, the Jiva becomes free from lust, anger and delusion which are the effects of Tamas; the Sattva quality also emancipates the Jiva from the bondage of the world. But the Sattva quality itself is also a robber. It cannot give Divine Wisdom or the knowledge of the Absolute. It leads one, however, up to the path of the Supreme Abode and then it says: "Behold there is thy home!" Then it disappears. Even the Sattva quality cannot go near the Abode of the Absolute.†

766. A devotee of Sáttvika nature offers *payasam* (sweetened milk-rice) to his chosen Deity; a Râjasika devotee gives as offering fifty richly-spiced dishes to his God; and a devotee of the Tâmasika type offers goats and other animals as sacrifice. Difference of nature makes all the difference in the act of worship. †

About Food.

767. When Divine Bliss is attained, one becomes intoxicated with it; he does not need to drink wine, though he looks like one drunk. When I see the Feet of my Divine Mother, I feel as intoxicated as if I have drunk five bottles of wine. In this state one cannot eat anything and everything. †

768. Q. As regards eating, should not one eat what one gets?

Sri Ramakrishna: That depends upon the spiritual state. In the path of Jnana that produces no harm, when a Jnani eats, he pours the food as an offering in the fire of *Kundalini*. But for a Bhakta it is different. A Bhakta should eat only pure food, such food as he can freely offer to his Beloved Lord. Animal food is not for a Bhakta.

But at the same time I must say that if a man loves God, living upon the flesh of a pig, he is blessed, but wretched is the man who lives on milk and rice or on *Havishyánna* but whose mind is absorbed in Lust and Gold. †

769. Once I took as *mantram* the name of Allah from a Mahommedan teacher and repeated the name for

several days, strictly observing their ways, and ate their food. During that period I could not go to the temple of Mother Kali, or take the names of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. †

770. Why is it that people are fed at a religious feast? Do you not think that it is the same as offering a sacrifice to God who is the Living Fire in all creatures? But bad men, not God-fearing, guilty of adultery and so forth, should on no account be entertained at such a feast. Their sins are so great that several cubits of earth beneath the place where they eat are held to become polluted. †

Against Siddhis or Psychic Powers.

771. The realisation of God is not the same as the acquirement of the Siddhis or psychic powers. Krishna once said to Arjuna: "When you see one who exercises any of the Yoga powers, you may know that such a one has not realised God, because the exercise of these powers requires *Ahamkara* or egotism which is an obstacle in the path of Realisation." †

772. There is indeed great danger in possessing the Siddhis. Totapuri thus taught me the Truth. A *Siddha* was once sitting on the sea-shore. Suddenly there arose a violent storm, which caused him great distress. Desiring to stop it he exclaimed: "Let the storm cease!" His command was instantly fulfilled. But a vessel which was passing at a distance with sails set, capsized as the wind suddenly died away, and all on board were drowned. The *Siddha* was the cause of the disaster and therefore he had to take the sin of killing so many innocent persons. As the result of this terrible sin, he lost all his power and after death had to suffer in purgatory. †

773. There was another Siddha, who was very proud of his Yoga powers. He was a good man and an ascetic. One day the Lord, to teach him a lesson, came

to him in the form of a saint and said: "Revered Sir, I have heard that thou possessest wonderful powers." The good man received him kindly and gave him a seat. At this moment an elephant was passing by. The saint asked him, "Sir, if thou desirest, canst thou kill this elephant?" The Siddha replied, "Yes, it is possible;" and taking a handful of dust, he repeated some *mantrams* over it and threw it on the elephant. Immediately the animal yelled, fell on the ground in agony and died. Seeing this, the saint exclaimed: "What wonderful power thou possessest! Thou hast killed this huge creature in a moment!" The saint then entreated him, saying, "Thou must also possess the power of bringing him back to life." The Siddha replied, "Yes, that is also possible." Again he took a handful of dust, chanted some *mantrams* and threw it on the elephant, and lo! the elephant revived and walked away. The saint expressed his amazement at the sight and again exclaimed: "How wonderful indeed are thy powers! But let me ask thee one question. Thou hast killed the elephant and brought him back to life; but what hast thou gained? Hast thou realised God?" Thus saying, the saint departed, and the Siddha became wiser.

God cannot be realised so long as there is the least desire for powers in the heart. †

774. It is the mean-minded who covet supernatural powers, such as curing diseases, causing lawsuits to be won, and walking on the waters. Those who are pure Bhaktas do not want anything but the lotus-feet of the Lord.

Those who have a bit of supernatural powers, get reputation and social distinction. Many desire to pose

as Gurus that people may hold them in esteem, and they may get disciples and followers.

To play the part of a Guru is like embracing a courtesan's life!—Selling oneself for such paltry things as gold, social reputation and bodily enjoyments! It is a bad use made of the body, mind, and soul which help us to the realisation of God. †

775. Siddhis or miraculous powers are to be avoided like filth. These come of themselves by virtue of Sadhanas or religious practices, and Samyama or control of the senses. But he who sets his mind on the Siddhis, remains stuck thereto,—he cannot rise higher.

776. There was a man named Chandra who acquired the power called *Gutikásiddhi*. Keeping an amulet (*Gutiká*) with him, he could roam anywhere at will or penetrate into any place without being seen by any person. The man was at first an austere seeker and devotee of God. Later on, however, when he came by that power, he began to exercise it in satisfying his lower nature. I warned him against doing so, but he paid no heed. He used to frequent unseen a gentleman's house and had an illicit amour with a lady of the family. He lost all his power thereby and became a fallen soul.

777. At the time of my practising austere Sadhanas under the Panchavati a man named Girija came there. He was a great Yogi. When I wanted to come to my sleeping-room in the dark night, he used to raise his arm and a strong light was projected from his body, lighting the whole path. By my advice he gave up using that power

and turned his mind to the realisation of the Eternal Reality. He lost that power but gained in true spirituality.

778. A disciple once told Sri Ramakrishna that in the course of his meditation he could see things as they actually happened at a distance and also what certain people were doing at the time, and that on subsequent enquiry the vision proved to be correct. Sri Ramakrishna said to him, "My boy, for some days, don't meditate. Those things, seeing visions and so forth, are obstacles to the realisation of God."

779. There were two brothers, of whom the elder left home and became a Sannyasin. After twelve years he came to see his birthplace. His younger brother asked him, "Brother, do tell me what you have gained by leaving home and roaming about so long." "Come and see!" answered the brother, and taking him to the river near the village, walked over it to the other side. The younger brother gave the ferryman one pice and crossed the river simultaneously. Then he said, "O dear brother, after all, you undertook severe austerities and penances all these years just to acquire this power which is worth only a pice!"

On Holy Places and Pilgrimage.

780. My boy, know that there must be manifestation of God in places where countless people have long practised austerity, Japam, meditation, concentration, prayer and worship, with a view to realising Him. Through their devotion spiritual ideas have become condensed there as it were, hence in those places one feels easily an awakening of spirituality and realises Him. From time immemorial numberless Sadhus, devotees and men of realisation have come to these holy places (*tirthas*) to have a vision of God, and have called upon Him with an outpouring of their heart, setting aside all desires. Therefore, God, though equally present everywhere, manifests Himself specially in these places: in the same way as water can be had anywhere by digging into the ground, but where there is a well, a tank or a lake, one has not to dig for water, but can get it whenever one likes.

781. Pilgrimages, without love and devotion to God, carry no reward. With devotion within thy heart, it is not absolutely necessary that thou must visit holy places. *

782. As cows after eating their fill of fodder lie quietly down at a place and chew the cud, so after visit-

ing a holy spot or a place of pilgrimage, you must take hold of the holy thoughts that rise in the mind there, sit down in a solitary spot and think of them till you become immersed in them. You must not let them slip off from your mind as soon as you turn away from those places, and attach yourselves to sense-pursuits. In that case the divine thoughts bring no lasting effect on the mind.

783. My boy, he who has God here, (in the heart), has Him there (in the *tirthas*) also. He who has Him not here, has Him not there.

784. He who has the spirit of devotion in him receives an awakening in holy places and that spirit becomes intensified, but what will one gain in particular who has not that spirit in him? Even going to live in holy places, his mind will all the same be engaged in worldly thoughts and pursuits.

785. Travel to all the four quarters of the earth, you will find nothing (no true religion) anywhere. Whatever there is, is here (he said, pointing to his heart).

Reincarnation.

780. So long as a man remains ignorant, in other words, so long as he has not realised God, he will have to be born on earth. But after enlightenment one has no more to return to this world. He has neither to come to this earth nor to go to any other sphere.

Potters let their wares out in the sun to dry. Haven't you noticed that they include unbaked as well as baked ones? When cattle or other animals pass over the place, some of the vessels are broken. When they happen to be baked ones, the potter throws them away as useless. But if they are unbaked, he takes them up again and pounds them into a lump which he again puts on the wheel, to make new vessels.

Hence I say, so long as one has not realised God, he will have to return to the potter's hands, that is to say, to be born again and again into this world.

It is useless to sow paddy that is boiled. It no more sprouts. After a man is subjected to the fire of knowledge, he cannot help in further creation, he becomes free. [?]

Miscellaneous.

787 He who thinks he ought to exert himself, must do it.

Q. Sir, how long should we fulfil our duties towards the family?

Sri Ramakrishna: They must not suffer for want of food and clothing. But if the son is able to support himself, you have no longer to look after him. After the young one of a bird has learned to pick its food the parent-bird pecks at it, if it tries to partake of her food. †

788. The Bhagavan used to tell this funny story: There was a goldsmith who had a shop. He was a through and through devotee—a staunch Vaishnava, and had a necklace of beads on his neck, the distinctive mark of his sect on his forehead, and a rosary, to tell the name of the Lord, in his hand. Everyone trusted him and used to come only to his shop, thinking that great Bhaktas that they were, they could never cheat anybody. Whenever a body of customers came, they found some one of the artisans saying, 'Keshava!' 'Keshava!' Presently another would ejaculate, 'Gopala!' 'Gopala!' After a while a third would say, 'Hari!' 'Hari!' Somebody would put in after this, 'Hara!'

'Hara!' Hence, finding so much chanting of Divine names going on, people would naturally conclude that the goldsmith was a very good man. But what do you think the truth was? The man who said, 'Keshava!' 'Keshava!' meant, 'Who are these (customers)?' He who said, 'Gopala!' 'Gopala!' conveyed that he had tested them and found them to be but 'a herd of cows!' The man who said, 'Hari!' 'Hari!' meant, 'If they are such a foolish lot, I may steal, of course?' And he who said, 'Hara!' 'Hara!' meant, 'Oh yes, do, they are but a herd of cows!'¶ †

789. In big shops there are huge jars of rice, reaching up to the ceiling. Some of these contain pulses also. But lest they be eaten away by rats, the shopkeeper puts a quantity of parched rice, some of it sugared, on a winnowing-fan. They taste sweet and at the same time have a characteristic flavour. And the whole family of rats rush to that winnowing fan, and get no clue to the huge jars of rice. Men are infatuated with lust and gold! They remain in the dark about God †

790. The Vaids prepare the medicine called *Makaradhwaja* in a bottle. Applying earth all about it they put it in fire. The gold that is in the bottle gets mixed up with certain other ingredients through the action of heat, and makes the medicine. The man then takes the bottle out, carefully breaks it, and preserves the medicine that is inside. It matters little then, whether the bottle be

¶ All the four words have double meanings in Bengali which lend piquancy to the joke.

kept or thrown away. Similarly, it matters little whether the body remains or goes, after one has realised God. †

791. In a certain village there lived a weaver. He was very spiritual; everyone trusted and loved him. The weaver went to the market to sell his cloth. If a customer asked the price of it, he would say: "By the will of Rama the thread cost one rupee, by the will of Rama the labour cost four annas, by the will of Rama the profit is two annas, by the will of Rama the price of the cloth as it stands is one Rupee and six annas." People had such confidence in him that they would immediately pay the price and take the cloth. The man was a true devotee. At night after supper he would sit for a long time and meditate on God and repeat His holy name.

Once it was late into night; he could not sleep; he was sitting alone in the courtyard near the entrance, smoking. A gang of robbers was passing that way. They wanted a carrier, and seeing this man, they dragged him away with them. Then they broke into a house and stole a great many things, some of which they piled on the poor weaver's head. At this moment the watchman came up, the robbers ran away and the poor weaver with his load was caught. He had to spend that night in confinement. Next morning he was brought before the judge. The people of the village, hearing what had happened, came to see the weaver. They unanimously declared, "My lord, this man could not steal anything." The judge then asked the weaver to describe what had occurred. The weaver said: "My Lord, by the will of Rama, I was sitting in the courtyard; by the will of

Rama, it was very late in the night; I, by the will of Rama was meditating upon God and repeating His holy name when by the will of Rama, a band of robbers passed that way; by the will of Rama they dragged me away with them; by the will of Rama they broke into a house; by the will of Rama they piled a load on my head; when by the will of Rama, the watchman came up, and by the will of Rama I was caught. Then by the will of Rama I was kept in prison, and this morning the will of Rama has brought me before thee." The judge, seeing the innocence and spirituality of the man, ordered him to be released. Coming out the weaver said to his friends, "The will of Rama has released me."

Whether you live in the world or renounce it, everything depends upon the will of Rama. Throwing your whole responsibility upon God do your duty in the world. †

792. There are various faiths in the world! As many faiths, so many paths. But everyone thinks only his own faith to be the right one, that his own watch alone is going right!

But then, however wrong the other watches may be, the sun is going aright! One has to correct all watches by that. †

793. Before proceeding to a certain act one must have belief first, and with it there is a joy at the prospect of the object. Then only does the man take up the work. For instance, one must first have the idea, the belief that there is a jar of *mohurs* underground, and along with this a prospective joy at the thought of the

Then he begins to dig. In the course of digging, when he hears a tinkling sound, his joy becomes greater. When, next, the rim of the jar appears, the joy becomes still more intense. The joy goes on increasing gradually in this way. †

794. It is a thin ego that personages like the Incarnations possess. Through this ego God is always visible. For example, a man is standing on one side of a wall, on either side of which are boundless stretches of land. If there be an aperture in the wall, the whole of the other side is visible, and if this be big enough, one can pass through it as well. The ego of men like the Incarnations is that wall with the aperture. Even though they be on this side of the wall, they can see the boundless extent of land on the other. The meaning of this is that though they have taken up bodies, they are always in a state of Yoga, and, if they like, can enter into Samadhi on the other side of the big aperture. Again, if this be big enough, they can come and go through it, that is to say, can come down to a lower plane of consciousness even after their Samadhi. †

795. Some spiritual exercise is needed. As one progresses in it, one gets joy, by degrees. If there be a jar full of treasures buried deep into the earth, and if any one wants it, he must take the trouble of digging on. The brow sweats, and it is only when after much excavation the spade strikes against the jar and produces the metallic sound, that one gets delighted. The clearer the sound, the more is his delight. So, go on calling upon the Lord; think on Him. He Himself will arrange everything. †

796. One has not the least fear if but the Guru is pleased. A tigress happened to attack a flock of goats; when, in the act of springing, she gave birth to a whelp. The tigress died, but the whelp continued to be brought up in company of the goats. He ate grass as the others did, and bleated as the rest did. By degrees the whelp grew very big. One day another big tiger sprang on that very flock of goats. He was startled to see the herbivorous tiger, and straightway chased and caught him, who however began to bleat. The former managed to drag him near a pool and said, "Here, look at your face in the water, see how it is exactly like mine. And here, take this lump of meat." Thus saying he forced the meat into his mouth, though he would by no means eat, bleating all the while. But having got a taste of the blood, he began to take it. The stranger tiger said to him, "You now understand that you are not different from what I am. Now, come with me and let us go to the woods."

Hence, when the Guru is pleased, you have no more to fear. He it is who will make you know who you are, and what your real nature is.

Directly one has gone through ever so little spiritual exercise, the Guru makes him understand which is which. He will then himself understand which is real and which is unreal,—that God is real and this world is unreal. †

797. As is one's mental attitude, so is the result: Two friends were going along the way There was going on the chanting of the Bhagavata, at a certain place. One of the friends said, 'Come, let us listen to the Bhagavata a while,' but the other just peeped, and left

the spot to go to a house of ill-fame. While there, he soon got disgusted in his mind, and began to say to himself, 'Fie upon me! My friend is listening to the chant of the Lord's name, and what a place I am in!' On the other hand, he who was listening to the Bhagavata, also got disgusted He thought, 'What a fool I am! What gibberish they are talking, and I am sitting here! How my friend is enjoying himself!' When these two died, he who had listened to the Bhagavata was carried by the agents of Yama, the God of death, while he who visited the house of notoriety was conducted to heaven by the followers of Vishnu.

God looks at the workings of one's mind. He does not take into account what in particular a person is doing, or where he is lying. The Lord recognises the motive alone. †

798. When the love for God comes in the heart, a very little awakening is sufficient.

Then uttering the name of Rama once is equivalent to practising the *Sandhya* ceremony ten millions of times. †

799. When the mind joins itself to Him, one sees the Lord very near. He sees Him inside the heart.

But there is another point in this, viz, the more intense will this union be, the more will the mind withdraw itself from outward objects. There is a story of a devotee in the Bhaktamâla. He used everyday to frequent a public woman's house One day he was going there late at night, being detained at home by the *Sraddha* ceremony of his parents. He was carrying in his hand a portion of the delicacies prepared on the

occasion, as a present for the woman His mind was so engrossed upon the woman that he had no idea of what he was treading over or what way he was going. On this way was a Yogin who was meditating on God with eyes closed The man's feet touched his body and he burst out in a passion, "What! Art thou blind? I am meditating on God, and thou hast trod upon my person?" "Excuse me," said the man, "but let me ask you one question: Engrossed with thoughts of a public woman as I am, I have no objective consciousness, while you are meditating on God and yet have retained full consciousness of the outside world What sort of meditation is this!" The man later on turned into a Bhakta and renounced the world in search of God Before parting he addressed the woman as mother and said, "You are my Guru, for, it is you who have taught me how to be attached to God" †

800 There is no sin in disobeying one's superiors for the sake of God. Bharata disobeyed Kaikeyi for the sake of Rama. The Gopis disobeyed their husbands for the sake of seeing Krishna. Prahlada disobeyed his father for the sake of God. Vali disobeyed his Guru, Sukrac[illegible], to please the Lord. Vibhishana disobeyed his eld[illegible], Ravana, to win the grace of Rama. †

801. [illegible] [illegible]er was taking a cow for slaughter to a d[illegible] [illegible]ing illtreated in the hands of a strang[illegible] [illegible] on the way and the man found g[illegible] [illegible] after several hours, at noon, [illegible] being thoroughly exhausted [illegible] near by and

partook of the *sadâvrata* (free dole of food). Feeling himself refreshed after a full meal he was able to lead the cow easily to her destination. Now, a part of the sin of killing that cow fell upon the donor of the *sadâvrata*. So even in giving food and alms in charity, one should discriminate that the recipient is not a vicious and sinning person who would use the gift to evil purposes. †

802. Dr. Srinath (to his friends): Everyone is bound down to Nature. None can escape the results of actions already done,—the Prârabdha.

Sri Ramakrishna: Why, if one repeats His name, if one thinks on Him, and surrenders himself to Him—

Dr. Srinath: Excuse me, Sir, but how can the Prârabdha be done away with?—the actions of countless previous births?

Sri Ramakrishna: Some portion of them one has to bear. But through the power of His name, the majority of the ties of Karma are snapped asunder. A man, owing to his actions of past lives, would perhaps have been born blind for seven successive births. But he bathed in the Ganges and a bath in the Ganges leads to liberation. The man's eyes remained blind as before, but he escaped the other six births. †

803. The Master used to make light of disease and other troubles by saying, "Let grief and let body take care of themselves, but let my mind be ever cheerful."

804. Think at the time of meditation that you are fastening your mind with a silk string to the lotus-feet of your Beloved. I say 'silk string,' because the Lord's

feet are so, so tender! And any other string would hurt them!

805. One should not think on the Ishtam merely at the time of meditation and then forget all about it. Some part of the mind must always be kept directed towards Him. You have often noticed that a lamp is kept constantly burning during the worship of the Goddess Durga. It is imperative to keep a light constantly burning in the presence of a God, and take care not to let it go out. If it is extinguished, it means ill-luck to the owner of the house. Similarly, installing the Ishtam on the lotus of the heart one should keep the lamp of His remembrance always bright. While attending to the daily duties of life one must now and then watch whether that lamp is constantly burning or not.

806. Upon my honour I say, he who wants Him, realises Him without fail.

807. The Lord is very quick-eared; indeed He hears everything. He has heard every time you have prayed to Him, and is sure to manifest Himself to you some day or other, at least at the time of your death.

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* Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna by M.

† Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in Bengali by M.